

'Tehran still trying for peace'

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani said Tehran was in touch with a number of unidentified countries in last-minute efforts to avert a war in the Gulf, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Tuesday. In a meeting with Mauritanian Foreign Minister Hosni Sidi, Mr. Rafsanjani said that "although not much time is left, we are in contact with places where we think are effective, so that we may be able to stop a war." But IRNA said Abdul Salam Jalloud, right-hand man of Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, arrived in Tehran Tuesday with a plan for peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis. Jalloud, who arrived in Tehran from Baghdad, reported to Iranian Vice-President Hassan Habib on his talks with Iraqi officials. IRNA did not specify details of the Libyan initiative. Iran has said it will remain neutral if hostilities erupt between Baghdad and the U.S.-led coalition ranged against Iraq. But Iran's state-run Kayhan Al Ahrabi suggested Monday Tehran could abandon its neutrality and form an alliance with Iraq if war erupted. Iraq and Iran made peace in August. Tehran and Baghdad signed an agreement Tuesday lifting a decade-long ban on pilgrims from both countries to visit holy sites in Iran and Iraq.

Jordan Times

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French embassy in Baghdad shuts

BAGHDAD (R) — France's most senior diplomat in Iraq, Charge d'Affaires Andre Janier, said Tuesday he was closing the embassy and would leave Iraq as soon as possible. "I am leaving as soon as possible, tonight or tomorrow morning," Andre Janier told Reuters. But he said France had not entirely given up hope for a last-minute French initiative to avert war in the Gulf. But his impending departure appeared to signal that the initiative could be doomed. Mr. Janier spoke shortly after French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said in Paris that Iraq had made "no tangible response" to the peace bid. Mr. Janier spoke 12 hours before the expiration of a U.N. deadline for Iraq to pull out of Kuwait or face attack from more than half a million American and allied soldiers, backed by almost 2,000 warplanes, massed in Saudi Arabia. The United States and Britain have reacted coolly to the French plan, saying it gave in to Iraq's demands for a Middle East peace conference if agreed to withdraw from Kuwait. The impending French evacuation from Baghdad caps a diplomatic exodus which gathered pace after the collapse of talks in Geneva last week between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz.

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Mideast on precipice, King tells nation

- Jordan's principled position will not change • We want to live with dignity, honour like anyone
- We have exhausted all avenues for peace • We will face our fate united and fight if we have to
- Army will do its duty with confidence • Foreigners' safety is paramount

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein said Tuesday that the Middle East region was poised at the edge of a precipice after the Gulf crisis had been transformed into an imminent catastrophe.

In a nationwide address broadcast over radio and television, the King said that war was the "worst option that any party can resort to in order to settle a dispute as war's ugliness is projected not only in being opposed to peace and stability but also

when we realise that this war is being fought on a land rich with oil and the lifeline of progress on earth."

King Hussein voiced hope that the "present sufferings and pain will be the last as we aspire to the triumph of victory over madness and desire for security, justice and peace over the lust of war and injustice."

"A destructive war is about to begin and would not leave behind it any victorious..." he said.

The King said he had tried his best to help find a world-backed Arab solution to the crisis.

"We have not left a door which we did not knock on or a road we did not take to find a political settlement of this crisis," he added.

As late as Monday night King Hussein was seeking a solution in talks with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Austrian President Kurt Waldheim.

The King said Jordan, wedged between Iraq and Israel, was

prepared to defend itself against any threat.

"We will only bow down to God," he said. "We are now on our highest level of alert for any emergency, your Arab army is in the trenches on the frontlines and is certain that it is backed by its warrior people."

"... We will face our fate as a united family that is impenetrable, stubborn in its confrontation and will fight and resist if fighting is imposed on it and will keep its flag hoisted high," he

added. King Hussein said internationalising what was essentially an Arab problem had complicated the search for a peaceful solution to the crisis and could lead to "... the start of a war whose drums are being beaten now."

He said such a war, fought with sophisticated weaponry on the world's oilfields, would pose a threat "that would haunt our future and the future of all humanity."

Following is the text of the King's speech:

Fellow Jordanians, members of the one Jordanian family,

I salute you with a sense of pride and endeavour as we stand together at this very critical moment in the history of our country, our people and our nation. Our minds and hearts unite in the great hope that both our region and the world as a

whole would safely surmount the grave dangers that lay ahead. This is because all the doors of reason have been shut and the avenues for an honest dialogue have been blocked thus leaving the ghost of war hovering over the Arab individual, and, indeed, over the whole of humanity.

War is the worst option that any party to a conflict can resort to. The ugly aspect of such a war

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Gulf slides towards war

Combined agency dispatches

LESS THAN twelve hours before the Gulf deadline, France said its last-minute effort to avert war had drawn no response from Iraq.

"No sign has reached us from Iraq since yesterday which would lend credence to any... movement by (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein," Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said Tuesday.

Britain said it would press for

a U.N. Security Council appeal to Iraq to get out of Kuwait, as an alternative to a French peace plan attracting growing international support but drawing no response from Baghdad.

Armies across the Middle East were readying for war.

Six U.S. aircraft carriers with more than 450 warplanes aboard were moving into striking distance of Iraqi and Kuwaiti targets. Israeli air defences were on highest alert. Syrian troops were reported moving near the

Israeli-annexed Golan Heights. U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who returned from a weekend peace mission to Baghdad, said early Tuesday any extension of the deadline was "totally out of the question."

The French initiative calls on Iraq to announce without delay its intention to pull out of the emirate, in accordance with a timetable, and begin an immediate, speedy and massive withdrawal.

The statement would also refer to a properly structured Middle East peace conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict, at an appropriate time.

It proposes U.N. observers to monitor an Iraqi withdrawal, a peacekeeping force drawn from Arab countries and a guarantee to Iraq that it would not be attacked.

"The responsibility for the existing situation lies with Iraq,"

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Iraqis mark 'day of courage'

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis marched through Baghdad during Tuesday's "day of courage" shouting "victory to Saddam" and promising the "mother of all battles" if the multinational force attacks.

Iraqi radio said that millions demonstrated across the country, making it the largest outpouring in Iraqi history. The radio referred to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein as "mujahid," or holy warrior.

Thousands of demonstrators waved Soviet-designed AK-47 rifles that the government has given out to militia members for warding off invaders if Baghdad is attacked.

Iraq's press pledged that Kuwait would remain part of Iraq forever, and warned that American soldiers who try to prevent this face "the furnace of hell."

The Baghdad demonstrators came from all walks of life. In the main demonstration, in the

city's mammoth Palestine Square, it included government officials, students and housewives.

Tuesday was the Jan. 15 deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, which it invaded Aug. 2, or face attack by the U.S.-led multinational forces, which has about 600,000 troops in the Gulf region.

Iraqi radio referred to Jan. 15 as the "beginning of the end for world imperialism."

The Baghdad demonstration

was the popular equivalent to Monday's National Assembly session that gave unanimous support to President Saddam's position.

"We will die for you, Saddam," yelled women carrying AK-47s, while some people wearing traditional Arab robes danced with pitchforks and swords, symbolising Iraq's threat that any attack would launch a popular war in which the entire

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White House sees early action in Gulf

Combined agency dispatches

WASHINGTON — President George Bush, ready for tough decisions in the Gulf crisis, huddled with top advisers Tuesday and the White House said military action was likely "sooner rather than later" if Iraq defied a midnight EST (0500 GMT Wednesday) deadline to quit Kuwait.

"There's a concern that we reach that deadline we reach a point of decision," spokesman Martin Fitzwater said. "Sooner rather than later is probably a ready description."

Mr. Fitzwater said Mr. Bush met his top diplomatic and military advisers after talking by telephone with Episcopal Bishop Edmund Browning, who has been critical of his Gulf policy, and congressional chaplain Richard Halverson.

"I would say that the president is at peace with himself, ready to make the tough decisions ahead when necessary," the White House official said.

While insisting that Mr. Bush had not given up on reaching a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis, Fitzwater said the president planned no last-minute overture to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

"We have made every possible overture... basically the options are now (Iraq's) to get out of Kuwait," the presidential spokesman said.

"The Department of Defence is ready to execute any order we receive from the president," Defence Department spokesman Pete Williams said.

Mr. Williams said U.S. forces were training as usual but had taken unspecified security steps as the midnight United Nations deadline for Iraq's withdrawal approached.

"Obviously the forces can read the calendar," Williams said. "They know what the date is."

Williams said there were now more than 115,000 U.S. troops

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RJ suspends eastward flights, hikes surcharge

AMMAN (J.T.) — Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national air carrier, Tuesday announced that it was suspending its flights to the Far East as of Wednesday and imposing extra charges on goods and passengers to make up for soaring insurance charges which make flights very costly.

Husam Abu Ghazaleh, RJ's chief executive officer, announced an extra charge of JD 100 (\$150) for each passenger travelling to the Gulf region and JD 167 (\$200) for each passenger heading for Europe and other destinations. These extra charges will take effect as of Wednesday, Mr. Abu Ghazaleh said.

Abu Ghazaleh said that RJ will suspend flights to Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Calcutta, Karachi and New Delhi as of Jan. 16.

He said, however, that the airline will maintain services to all its stations in the Gulf region, the Middle East, Europe and North America but due to the limited number of aircraft at its disposal RJ will be forced in some cases to carry its passen-

gers aboard its planes at present stationed at Vienna.

Mr. Abu Ghazaleh said that insurance companies had raised their charges on all aircraft, and RJ was forced last week to transfer some of its aircraft to destinations outside the Kingdom.

These insurance companies, in the light of developments in the Gulf, have notified RJ of major increases in insurance charges some of which will have to be borne by the passengers themselves, Mr. Abu Ghazaleh pointed out.

According to reports from Europe, the war risk insurance coverage for commercial aircraft flying to the Gulf region was being determined on a flight-by-flight basis starting Monday.

It means that brokers may refuse to insure a flight or will slap another surcharge on premiums, already raised up to twentyfold last Jan. 2, said Tim Goodyear, spokesman of the International Air Transport Association, an airline industry group.

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Israelis kill 2 in W. Bank, Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli troops shot dead two Palestinians in the occupied territories and wounded at least 65 others in demonstrations against the killing in Tunis of three Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leaders, hospital and Palestinian sources said.

Thousands of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip chanted pro-Iraq slogans and demanded revenge for the slaying of PLO leader Salah Khalaf, known as Abu Iyad, and two other top figures.

Israel said it was not behind the killings of Abu Iyad, and Hayel Abdul Hamid and Fakhri Al Omari in Tunis late Monday.

The Israeli army imposed curfews throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip from dawn to prevent violence that has followed the killings of Palestinian leaders in the past.

But in the Gaza Strip, where about 350,000 people were under curfew, activists threw stones at soldiers, burned tyres and erected road blocks. There were protest marches everywhere. Black flags hung outside many homes.

Troops opened fire on youths hurling rocks — the main weapon of the three-year-old uprising against Israeli rule. Palestinians said at least 40 Gaza protesters were wounded.

Mansour Khalil Sheikhah, 17, was shot dead in Gaza City as he prepared to throw a stone at an army patrol with a group of fellow activists, they said.

In the West Bank, soldiers shot dead Abdul Basit Mohamad Obaidi, 19, during clashes in Silet Al Harthiyeh village, near Jenin. In nearby Qabanyah, at least 14 people were wounded in fierce clashes, hospitals said.

Helicopters hovered above and intermittently dropped teargas to disperse protesters.

The entire Gaza Strip was a closed military area — only residents could enter.

Israel troops killed 18 Palestinians in fierce clashes after PLO deputy military commander Khalil Al Wazir was killed in Tunis in April 1988, presumably by Israeli commandos.

Abu Iyad, Abu Hol and Omari assassinated

Combined agency dispatches

THREE PALESTINIAN leaders, including the legendary Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad), were assassinated in Tunis late Monday in a major blow to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Police arrested up to a dozen Palestinians after the assassinations by a renegade bodyguard.

The gunman fatally shot Khalaf, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's second in command in the mainstream Fateh group and Hayel Abdul Hamid (Abu Hol), PLO's security chief, police said.

He also killed Abu Mohammad Al Omari, Khalaf's chief bodyguard, and took Abdul Hamid's wife and teenage

daughter hostage inside their house in the suburb of Carthage, senior Palestinian commanders said.

The assailant, Hamza Abu Zeid, demanded a plane to fly to an unspecified destination before PLO guerrillas and Tunisian police stormed the house and arrested him. The PLO commanders said. The hostages were freed unharmed from the six-hour ordeal.

A PLO communique described Abu Zeid as "a planted agent, who undertook dealings with traitorous parties." It called the slayings "cowardly."

"This loss, however, will only solidify our determination to

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King condoles PLO leader

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday sent a cable of condolence to Palestine President Yasser Arafat on the death of three senior Palestinian officials in Tunis expressing deep grief over the loss of the three leaders, the King said.

"We were deeply pained at the death of the three Palestinian leaders as a result of a despicable crime and strongly condemn the assassination which would not affect the resolve of the Palestinian people and would not deter the Palestinians from pursuing their legitimate struggle for their rights in Palestine."

Cables of condolence were sent to the Palestine president by Prime Minister Mudar Badran and Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri.

Palestinians react with shock, anger to leaders' assassination

By Sana Atiyeh

Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Palestinians reacted with shock and feelings of depression to the Monday night Tunis assassinations of Fateh's central committee members Salah Khalaf, better known as Abu Iyad, Hayel Abdul Hamid and Abu Iyad's bodyguard and blamed the Israeli secret-service, Mossad, for carrying out the killings.

Fateh's central committee member, Abbas Zaki said, there was no doubt that Mossad was behind the assassinations.

In a statement distributed to the press, Zaki said the killings were timed to coincide with the Jan. 15 deadline to "affect the morale of the Palestinians and Arabs and aimed at hitting the intifada."

"Despite the assassinations and other assassination attempts (on the Palestinian leadership), the Palestinian revolution will continue as long as there is a Palestinian people and Arab masses," Zaki stated.

He vowed that the intifada and revolution would continue until the liberation of Palestine.

The general reaction to the death of Abu Iyad, who was second in command after Yasser Arafat in the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) mainstream Fateh faction, was of silent shock.

Palestinian ambassador to Jordan Tayeb Abdul Rahim expressed shock to a reporter soon after the news of the assassinations was released.

"Oh God, I can't believe they (Israelis) did it to us

again," the ambassador said.

As people paid respects and condolences at two PLO offices in Amman, a crowd of Palestinians at the Baqa'a refugee camp outside Amman staged a silent march to mourn the death of the Palestinian leaders, and hoisted black flags on the rooftops of the shacks.

Following a pick-up truck decorated with black and Palestinian flags and the Fateh emblem, some 150 people linked arms and walked in silence as verses from the holy Koran were recited through the truck's loudspeaker.

Marchers were heard blaming Israel for the murders of the Palestinian leaders. "May God break Israel," said an old woman wearing the Palestinian embroidered dress.

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Syria masses troops, tanks close to Golan Heights

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuters

AMMAN — Syria is massing troops and tanks close to the Israeli-held Golan Heights in a precautionary move against possible Israeli involvement in the Gulf war, a senior Jordanian security official said Tuesday.

He said Syria had withdrawn the bulk of its special police forces from Lebanon and stationed them in Damascus and other cities to quell possible trouble by pro-Iraqi Syrians. Syria has contributed thousands of troops to the U.S.-led multinational forces

in Saudi Arabia to defend the kingdom.

But Damascus says it will not take part in any attack on Iraq and will help Jordan in the event of an Israeli attack.

The Syrian army has moved at least one military division consisting of four brigades with tanks and air defence supplies to Dar'a and the western sector where it has taken up defensive positions," the official told Reuters.

Dar'a is a black-shale town in southern Syria on the border with Jordan and is also close to the Golan Heights.

"The build-up is to prevent airspace violations by Israeli

jets which might fly over southern Syrian areas en route to Baghdad to retaliate against possible Iraqi attack on the Jewish state," he added.

"The Syrians have also moved out many of their tough special security units in Lebanon and put them on alert in Damascus and other places."

"They fear an Israeli attack on Iraq might unleash anger among Syrians who will see it as an attack on all the Arab Nation..." said the official who did not want to be named.

Despite Syria's rivalry with Iraq, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa said last week that Damascus would de-

fend any Arab state, including Iraq, if it were attacked by Israel.

Israel, Jordan and Syria have put their armed forces on high alert ahead of the United Nations deadline for Iraq to quit Kuwait by 7 a.m. (0500 GMT) Wednesday or face war.

Baghdad, which says it has missiles capable of hitting Israel, has threatened to make the Jewish state its first target if it is attacked by the multinational forces. Israel says it will retaliate.

Jordan, fearing Israel might attack the Kingdom or use it as passage to launch strikes against Iraq, has sent troops

and tanks to the ceasefire line with Israel.

Jordan says it will seek the help of Egypt — which has also committed thousands of troops to the multinational force — to help beat back any Israeli attack.

J.T. adds: Osama Al Baz, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's political advisor, said Monday Egypt would not allow Israel or any other country to attack Jordan or any Arab state which is party to the Joint Arab Defence Pact.

Baz noted that his country was committed to safeguard

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Jordan, Iran resume diplomatic relations after 10-year-break

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Iran have resumed diplomatic relations after almost a decade of break and the two countries are soon expected to name their respective ambassadors to each other.

An agreement, signed Monday at the United Nations by the permanent delegates of the two countries, said the resumption of relations, severed in January 1981 — shortly after the Gulf war broke out between Iran and Iraq — took immediate effect.

Relations between the two countries will be "on the basis of the principle of equal rights and sovereignty, respect for each other's independence and territorial integrity and non-interference in the inter-

nal affairs of each other and peaceful coexistence," according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Jordan and Iran enjoyed excellent relations until the Islamic revolution in the Persian state in 1979; and Jordan's support for Iraq in the Gulf war led to the severance of diplomatic relations in January 1981.

Monday's agreement was the culmination of a process launched with a meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries during the U.N. General Assembly session in September.

The Council of Ministers formally approved a decision to reestablish formal relations and reopen the Jordanian embassy in Tehran during a regular session Saturday. However, an ambassador has

not been named yet, an official source said.

"Naming of ambassadors is only an administrative formality, which will follow soon," the source said.

"I would also expect an exchange of visits by the foreign ministers, but it is not very imminent," added the source, who preferred anonymity.

Marwan Al Qasem, who was then foreign minister, had accepted an invitation by his counterpart Ali Akbar Velayati following their meeting at the U.N. in September and was expected to visit Tehran on his return from a trip to China. But the visit had to be shelved since the minister had to divert his trip through some of the Gulf states, informed sources said.

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Mideast rings with Arab support for Iraq, wrath at U.S.

By John Baggeley
Reuters

NICOSIA — Roars of defiance rose from tens of thousands of Arab supporters of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein Tuesday, just hours before war against U.S. and allied armour looked set to become reality.

In Iraq and across the region, from Yemen to Morocco, the massed anger of Iraq's backers proclaimed hatred of the United States and loyal support for President Saddam. In cities across the country, defiant Iraqis chanted "defeat for the aggression." Newspapers stirred emotional fervour on the "day of allegiance, challenge and holy struggle behind Saddam Hussein" and forecast inevitable defeat in a second Vietnam for Washington.

The emotion was not echoed in nations heading the anti-Iraq alliance. But in at least one country, Syria, tough special units were reported to have been deployed in case conflict ignited so far silent wrath.

"Kuwait is ours" chanted hundreds of thousands of Iraqis at mass rallies organised by the government.

The protests, with banners depicting U.S. President George Bush as a criminal, were organised to show Iraq's determination to keep the

emirate seized Aug. 2 and to ignore an 8 a.m. Wednesday (0500 GMT) deadline for Iraq's troops to get out or face attack.

An eerie silence hung parts of Baghdad where schools were closed and streets practically deserted by residents drawn to the rallies — or heading north to seek the safety of the countryside from airborne attack.

In Yemen, sympathetic to Baghdad despite backing calls for Iraq to leave Kuwait, about 70,000 protesters surged through the capital Sanaa calling on Iraq to liberate Tel Aviv.

"We are your soldiers, Saddam," proclaimed one banner, while another declared: "O, Saddam, the flame, liberate Tel Aviv."

Saddam has vowed that Israel will be Iraq's first target if war breaks out.

Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories ignored curfews to erupt in demonstrations which mixed anger at the Tuesday killings of three Palestinian leaders in Tunis and their support for Baghdad.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are staunch backers of Iraq for its attempts to demand world attention for the Arab-Israeli conflict as a price for discussing the Gulf

crisis.

Israeli troops shot dead two and wounded at least 65. Just north of the Jewish state thousands of Palestinians marched in South Lebanon to support Baghdad.

In the tattered Ain Al Hilweh refugee camp in the port of Sidon, some 10,000 people shouted in unison: "Yes to Saddam, death to Bush, death to Israel."

"Don't worry Saddam, we will drink the blood of the American aggression," read one of hundreds of banners. More than 10,000 people demonstrated in Tunis, calling "with Iraq, against war" and "not peace without a solution of the Palestinian problem."

Armoured vehicles deployed around the embassies of the United States, Britain, France and Saudi Arabia, the main countries in the anti-Iraq coalition.

Tunisian authorities, fearing that Islamic fundamentalists might organise demonstrations if war broke out, ordered all high schools and universities closed until further notice.

In Morocco, which has sent 1,500 troops to the multinational force opposing Iraq in the Gulf, demonstrators supporting Iraq marched down the main streets of Oujda, a frontier town near Algeria. Morocco has warned that no public protests over the Gulf will be tolerated.

Iraqis

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society would fight. "Allah-u-Akbar" (God is great). The hour of jihad (holy war) has arrived," read one of the banners carried by the demonstrators.

Officials of the governing Baath Arab Socialist Party said similar demonstrations were organised in five suburban districts of Baghdad, a city of 3.8 million.

Demonstrations were also held in the major cities of Karbala, Basra and Mosul, according to the party officials, who said at least five-million people took part nationwide.

Iraq has a population of about 18 million. "Today is the day of allegiance, challenge and holy struggle behind Saddam Hussein, the leader who will triumph by the will of God," said a banner headline in the newspaper Al Iraq.

The English-language Baghdad Observer ran an editorial headline "U.S. defeat inevitable despite its technology."

Parts of Baghdad were virtually deserted, traffic was down to a trickle and schools empty as schoolchildren and government workers converged on staging points for the mass rallies.

President Saddam has shrugged off a series of last-ditch efforts to convince him to comply with the deadline.

Diplomats say the Iraqi leader's assessment of the United States has been flavoured by his interpretation of the American defeat in Vietnam, where high-technology weapons failed to vanquish an enemy which used such primitive means as bicycles to carry supplies to the front.

Such thinking was reflected by the Baghdad Observer editorial, which drew parallels between anti-war demonstrations in Europe over the past few weeks and widespread anti-war sentiment during the Vietnam war.

"The Americans... were forced to leave Indochina, taking home over 50,000 body bags and some 300,000 wounded," the editorial said. "In his new adventure, Mr. Bush is sending inexperienced American youths to fight yet another dirty war."

"These men may be well-equipped but do they have the right fighting experience the other side has acquired (in eight years of war with Iraq)?" Echoing an argument Iraqi officials have made frequently as the clock ticked towards war, the editorial said: "If the Bush administration is counting on its advanced technology it will be disappointed again because the technology on paper or on charts is not always applicable on the ground."

Al Thawra, the newspaper of the Baath Party, said in a front-page editorial that Iraq was ready for war to keep Kuwait. "Kuwait has returned to its people. It has been integrated with Iraq's people and land... and will remain so forever," the editorial said.

Since the multinational force began assembling in Saudi Arabia, Iraq "has drawn the military, economic and political plans and made the necessary arrangements to defend its territorial integrity," the paper said.

The army daily, Al Qadisiya, said the United States would be surprised by Iraq's military power if war broke out. "It is Bush who wanted the war," the newspaper said. "But let him know that the furnace of hell will be open to the Americans and to their allies when they come."

"If the war breaks out, we will make Bush repent it and we will make his deadline a date which he would bear its consequences," Al Qadisiya added. "We have agreed to meet that challenge not for war itself but to save the world from the American wolf."

Hundreds of thousands around world demand no war in Gulf

Combined agency dispatches

HUNDREDS of thousands of people across the globe are staging protests against war in the Gulf.

In Chicago, thousands of protesters set up roadblocks, disrupting traffic for more than three hours in streets of the city centre. Some 2,000 demonstrators held a sit-in at the federal government office building.

In Cambridge, Massachusetts, American civil rights leader the Reverend Jesse Jackson said the United States had not exhausted all diplomatic options and called on U.S. leaders to tone down their language.

"Using negotiations, the process has not been exhausted. All this bellicose rhetoric and hostile language has drawn those (battles) lines more definitely," Jackson told a news conference. The two-time presidential candidate insisted war could be averted despite the U.N.-mandated deadline.

"The danger in setting an arbitrary date is that it reduces diplomatic latitude," he said before addressing hundreds of anti-war students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Leaders of Britain's Anglican and Roman Catholic churches

appealed to their congregations to pray that the world be spared potentially catastrophic war in the Gulf.

But if last-minute diplomatic efforts failed to prevent war, military action should be restricted to the minimum force needed to reverse the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, said Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie and Cardinal Basil Hume.

About 500 supporters of Nicaragua's leftist opposition Sandinista National Liberation Front began an anti-war vigil outside the U.S. embassy in Managua Monday, the eve of a United Nations deadline for Iraq to quit Kuwait.

Police set barricades in front of the fortress-like embassy but the demonstrators, including several U.S. citizens, remained peaceful, chanting slogans urging the United States to use diplomacy instead of force to resolve the Gulf crisis.

About 4,000 demonstrators rallied outside Sydney town hall Tuesday carrying six black coffins, one adorned with a gas mask, and waving banners proclaiming "Aussie blood for U.S. oil" and "No Gulf war."

The protesters, who began their rally beside one of the city's main war memorials, swelled

quickly from 30 people to 4,000 as they marched along George Street, the city's busiest, witnesses said.

The launch-time rally, staged by Network for Peace which has organised similar rallies throughout the country, heard speakers call for the resumption of Australia's parliament to debate the country's military commitment to the Gulf.

In Melbourne, about 300 protesters rolled oil drums down Bourke Street, the city's main thoroughfare. Hundreds marched in the rural cities of Ballarat and Bendigo, both about 100 kilometres from Melbourne.

In Berlin, about 500 German students staged an anti-war demonstration in front of the U.S. army headquarters in Berlin.

After a weekend that brought hundreds of thousands to the streets throughout Europe, other protests also were taking place, including a noisy march by 700 people in Bonn.

The protesters carried banners reading "No blood for oil," "Two world wars were enough," and "Yesterday Panama — today the Gulf — tomorrow a world conflagration."

"We want negotiations, not war, Saddam Hussein must leave Kuwait, but starting a war is not

the way to do it," said 20-year-old Philip Schmidt, one of those who marched through Bonn's government quarter.

Disciples of the late guru of free love, Bhagwan Rajneesh, issued an open invitation on Tuesday to a mammoth party at their commune in western India to prevent a Gulf war.

"The only way to stop the insanity of a third world war is to create such a celebration of love, life and laughter that none would dare to wipe out this beautiful world," said Swami Amrito, a closer aide of the late guru.

Amrito said the party would begin Saturday, the first anniversary of the death of Rajneesh, who preached uninhibited hedonism in the west Indian city of Poona. He returned there after being expelled from the United States in 1985.

Amrito offered no prediction on whether war might have broken out in the Gulf before the party got underway.

"This is going to be the biggest festival of song, dance, music and meditation in the world right now with thousands of friends and lovers... celebrating life," he said.

There would be meditation sessions, too, Amrito added.

U.S. doctors predict mass civilian casualties in Iraq

By Denis D. Gray
The Associated Press

AMMAN — In a large scale attack highly urbanised Iraq would suffer countless thousands of casualties of which some 80 per cent would be civilian, two American doctors have predicted.

"The nation of Iraq will basically be unable to cope with this disaster," said Dr. Jonathan Fine, who returned from Baghdad Monday after a two-day inspection of paediatric hospitals.

Fine and a colleague, Dr. Carl Taylor, told a news conference that added to war casualties would be children and others dying from an already great shortage of basic medicines and medical supplies.

The two said many wards they

visited were almost empty with very serious patients being sent away for either lack of medicines or because beds were being reserved for war victims.

"They are cleaning out the hospitals in preparation for casualties," said Taylor, who is associated with Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Fine heads the Physicians for Human Rights, a Boston-based organisation that has sent 30 missions to 19 countries to inspect medical and human rights conditions since it was founded in 1986.

The two admitted their trip was limited in time and scope and that all their interviews with doctors and patients were in the presence of "escorting government officials."

But the Americans said they

believed they were not shown particularly extreme conditions and that their observations were supplemented by interviews with Western doctors who had earlier worked in Baghdad.

The doctors were told there were only 250 hospital beds for burn victims in Baghdad, a city of four million, and another 400 beds for such patients in the rest of the country. Thousands of burn casualties could be expected in event of war, they said.

The number of beds country-wide for emergency cases also "paltry nothing" in relation to the severe wounded expected, they said.

Lacking in the hospitals visited were antibiotics, basic vaccines against children's diseases, even needles for spinal taps, they said. At one hospital the number of daily X-rays had

to be reduced from about 70 to between 10 and 17 due to a shortage of film.

The doctors said they believed supplies like basic foodstuffs and medicines which are exempt from U.N.-imposed sanctions were not coming into the country.

The world body imposed the sanctions after Iraq invaded Kuwait last Aug. 2.

The doctors based their estimate of civilian casualties on Iraq's urban population, the kinds of weapons likely to be used and on data from past wars.

The numbers might swell because of what they perceived as poor preparations for civilian evacuations. And they said destruction of water supplies and sewage systems would lead to deadly epidemics.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Americans divided on Gulf war

WASHINGTON (R) — A CBS News/New York Times poll published Tuesday showed Americans were divided on whether to start a war against Iraq when the U.N. deadline for Baghdad to withdraw its forces from Kuwait expires at midnight. The poll found that 47 per cent of Americans favoured military action, compared with 46 per cent who supported continued reliance on sanctions alone. Forty-two per cent of the 1,512 people surveyed expected war to last several months while 29 per cent thought war would last a few weeks and 21 per cent a year or more. A separate poll by the USA Today newspaper found that 48 per cent of 600 people surveyed in a nationwide telephone poll favoured immediate attack against Iraq. A poll of 750 Americans by the ABC Television network and the Washington Post found that 69 per cent favoured an attack against Iraq. Fifty-eight per cent favoured attack within a month while 37 per cent urged war as soon as the U.N. deadline permits. Twenty six per cent were opposed to any attack.

Two Britons killed in training crash

LONDON (AP) — Two airmen were killed when their Tornado jet crashed on a training flight in Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Defence said Monday. A spokesman said the plane crashed during a routine training mission from Dhahran on Sunday. Neither the pilot nor the navigator was able to eject, he said. The airmen were the sixth and seventh deaths among British forces since they joined the multinational force in the Gulf.

Iraqi ambassador to U.S. recalled

WASHINGTON (R) — Iraq's ambassador to the United States, Mohammed Al Mashtat, has been recalled by his government and will leave before the Tuesday midnight deadline for Iraqi troops to pull out of Kuwait, a senior State Department official said. A

charge d'affaires and three others will remain at the Iraqi embassy in Washington, he said. On Saturday, the United States told the Iraqi embassy to reduce its staff to four and the Iraqis decided that Mashtat would be among those to leave. He was to depart before the U.N. deadline expires at midnight EST on Tuesday (0500 GMT on Wednesday). Mashtat has been Iraq's main voice in the United States since the invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2 and has frequently appeared on television to explain the Iraqi view.

U.S. jet lost in Mediterranean

WASHINGTON (AP) — An F-4E fighter jet from the aircraft carrier America was lost at sea in the Eastern Mediterranean this weekend, the navy said. The missing pilot of the aircraft has been identified as David Warner, 28, of Jacksonville, Florida, a navy spokesman said. The carrier was operating in the Eastern Mediterranean at the time of the incident, which occurred Saturday evening local time, said Jim Mitchell. The aircraft was about 160 kilometres southeast of the carrier when radar contact was lost, the spokesman said.

India to maintain Gulf flights

NEW DELHI (R) — India announced Tuesday its national flag carrier Air India would maintain Gulf flights until war broke out. "Other airlines are pulling out of the Gulf. But we can't afford to do that because there are about 1.2 million Indians in the Gulf," an Air India spokesman told Reuters. "Our flights to and from the Gulf are only to bring them back. But we will keep their safety in view," he said. Air India operates 43 scheduled flights a week to the Gulf and Saudi Arabia and five to Tehran. Two extra daily flights, started to the Gulf cities of Doha and Dhahran Sunday to evacuate Indians, would continue, the spokesman said. They are bringing back 800 people a day.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE
16:00 Koran
16:15 Programme review
16:25 Children's programme
17:30 Educational programme
18:00 News summary in Arabic
18:05 Cairo news message
18:30 Local programme
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Arabic series
21:30 Arabic programme
22:00 News in Arabic
23:40 Play

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Documentary
18:30 Sixième Cauche
19:00 News in French
19:15 Carnet de Notes
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:30 After Henry
21:10 Our House
22:00 News in English
22:20 Not a Penny More. Not a Penny Less

PRAYER TIMES

05:11 Fajr
06:32 (Sunrise) Duha
11:45 Dhuhir

14:35 'Asr
16:29 Maghrib
18:20 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swatfah, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 623466
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Fair weather will prevail and winds will be northeasterly moderate. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./max. temp.
Amman 11/14
Aqaba 7/19
Deserts 0/15
Jordan Valley 8/20

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Wael Khattab 660917
Dr. Ramzi Al Mizawi 894788
Dr. Jamal Abu Baker 746426
Dr. Abdul Hadi Taysem 620115
First Pharmacy 661912
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 626762
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Shamsi pharmacy 637660
IRBID:
Dr. Shalikh Al Zagh (—)

Al Sharra pharmacy (275825)

ZARQA:
Dr. Salah Al Borini (—)
Khalifeh pharmacy 983417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
First Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Public Security Department 63821
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 660100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power 636381
Company 0991071
RJ Flight Information 08-33200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-33200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Al-Jahd Maternity, J. Amn 644412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Puleston, Shamsi 664174
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/5
Al-Basir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 6224020
Amal Hospital 674135
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983332
Greek Catholic Hospital (09)91071
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275335
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

10:00 Damascus (RJ)
10:00 Jeddah (RJ)
10:30 Laraca (RJ)
10:45 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:55 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
11:00 Cairo (RJ)
11:30 London (RJ)
11:30 Madrid (RJ)
11:30 Paris (RJ)
11:45 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
11:55 Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00 Brussels, Rome (RJ)
12:00 Athens (RJ)
12:30 Paris (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
10:00 Laraca (CV)

11:00 Jeddah (SV)
11:00 Benghazi (LN)
11:15 Sana'a, Jeddah (TY)
11:30 Cairo (MS)
11:30 Doha (TK)
11:30 Ankara, Istanbul (TK)
11:30 Frankfurt (LH)
11:30 Damascus (AF)
11:30 Paris, Damascus (RF)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

12:00 Cairo (RJ)
12:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:20 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:30 London (RJ)
12:30 Athens (RJ)
12:45 Riyadh (RJ)
13:00 New Delhi (RJ)
13:10 Cairo (RJ)
13:15 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
13:20 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
13:30 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
09:15 Beirut (ME)
10:00 Jeddah (SV)
10:00 Baghdad (LN)
10:00 Cairo (MS)
10:00 Sana'a (TY)
10:00 Dubai (EK)

10:45 Bahrain (TK)
10:45 Sana'a (LH)
10:45 Karachi (PK)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 380 / 480
Banana 500 / 450
Banana (Mukannam) 450 / 400
Beans 420 / 380
Cabbage 50 / 30
Carrot 200 / 150
Cauliflower 180 / 120
Custard 200 / 150
Cucumber (large) 120 / 60
Cucumber (small) 250 / 200
Dates 500 / 400
Eggplant 200 / 150
Garlic 200 / 150
Lemon 1700 / 1500
Mallow 180 / 120
Marrow (large) 120 / 60
Marrow (small) 250 / 200
Onion (dry) 250 / 200
Onion (green) 160 / 120
Okra 600 / 500
Orange 400 / 180
Pepper (hot) 280 / 220
Pepper (sweet) 150 / 100
Potato 300 / 280
Radish 150 / 100
Sage 400 / 300
Spinach 120 / 80
Tomatoes 180 / 120

UNDP director ends visit

Prince Hassan, U.N. official discuss Gulf, Jordan's needs

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday discussed with a visiting senior U.N. official programmes implemented in the Kingdom with the help of U.N. agencies and reviewed with him the latest developments in the Gulf crisis and their impact on Jordan.

William Draper, director of programmes at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also discussed with the Crown Prince emergency plans to be implemented by the United Nations offices in the event of war breaking out in the Gulf region.

Draper, who ended a two-day visit to Jordan and left for home after meeting the Prince, had earlier met with Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri to review the role of United Nations organisations in repatriating evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait arriving in Jordan, and UN programmes carried out in the Kingdom with UN assistance.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra quoted Masri as saying that the Jordanian government would be shouldering its duties towards the evacuees but was

only hampered by lack of international community concern, especially from the governments of those nationals who would need to be repatriated.

Draper for his part expressed appreciation of the humanitarian help given by Jordan to the evacuees and called on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities in this regard.

Jordan closed the Al Ruweished border post for evacuees coming from Iraq last Wednesday saying that the Kingdom was ill-equipped to handle any massive wave of people fleeing Iraq and Kuwait in the event of war.

Prime Minister Mudar Badran told parliament last week that the government had asked the Iraqi authorities not to allow any evacuees across the border. The border closure followed repeated Jordanian appeals for reimbursement for the funds it spent over the past five months on health, transportation and food services on some 865,000 evacuees mainly of Asian nationalities, and Egyptians.

Only \$12 million was received by the government offered by a number of nations and organisa-

tions out of a total of \$56 million spent on the evacuees.

On Jan. 8 UNDP Resident Representative Ali Atiqah said that the United Nations appreciated Jordan's efforts to deal with the problem and that it was doing all it can to ensure further in-kind and financial assistance. Atiqah said the UNDP has supplied Jordan with almost 20 per cent of the total amount spent on the evacuees and urged the Jordanian government to keep the border open for humanitarian reasons.

But despite the closure of the borders Salameh Hammad, who chairs a government-appointed Evacuee Welfare Committee announced Tuesday that the government has allowed 695 evacuees to enter Jordan at Al Ruweished crossing point Monday. He said that the new batch was allowed in following contacts between international organisations and governments whose nationals are stranded between Iraq and Jordan. Hammad said that U.N. organisations have worked out special arrangements for the evacuees to be repatriated.



His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday plants an olive tree marking Arbor Day (Petra photo)

Jordan marks Arbor Day

King plants olive tree

AMMAN (J.T.) — Faithful to an annual tradition His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday participated in tree planting celebrations and told people gathered for the occasion at Yajouz district that Arbor Day was one of the best occasions for the people to plant life in the good land of Jordan which everybody should be ready to defend at all costs.

After planting an olive tree at the site, prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture, the King said that he was always an optimist that peace would prevail despite the current critical circumstances.

We are ready to confront any challenge and to shoulder our duty in serving the coming generations, the King asserted.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan who was present at the ceremony said that Jordanian's have profound faith in their homeland and its precious soil.

This faith is not manifested because of Arbor Day only but rather is an expression of Jordanian's sense of belonging to the nation and an attachment to the good land, Prince Hassan noted.

Prince Hassan said that the tree stands out as a symbol of hope at a time when Jordan was preparing for the defence of the homeland.

Minister of Agriculture Mohammad Alawneh said in a statement at the ceremony that Jordan was intent on im-

plementing a plan for greening various areas of the country within agricultural strategy to produce sufficient food and ensure food security.

Ministry of Agriculture officials said that the Yajouz site has an area of 70 dunums planted by 100 types of different saplings annually.

Prime Minister Mudar Badran, speakers of the upper and lower houses of parliament, the chief of the Royal Court and senior officials and high ranking army officers attended the celebration.

Her Majesty Queen Noor took part in the celebrations by planting an olive tree at the grounds of the Nursing College in Yajouz. Present at the ceremony during which students and teachers planted trees was Health Minister Adnan Jaljoul and the Zarqa governor.

The Ministry of Agriculture said earlier that it has a plan for planting trees in 30,000 dunums of land every year to help green the country by the year 2000. The ministry owns 13 nurseries which produce nearly nine million saplings every year distributed to people and organisations or sold for a nominal price to encourage people to grow trees.

Prince Hassan and Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath also planted trees along with the employees of the Royal Scientific Society at the Yajouz site.

Saudis grant overflight rights to 5 IOM planes

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Fears that Saudi Arabia might close its airspace for all commercial traffic ahead of the Tuesday/Wednesday deadline for what is essentially war or peace in the region appear to have receded Tuesday.

The Saudi authorities have granted permission for five Aeroflot charter planes to fly over Saudi territory, and the first flight, carrying over 300 Vietnamese evacuated from Iraq, left Tuesday evening, a senior international relief agency official said.

Civil aviation sources reported heavy traffic in the Saudi airspace, which houses some of the key air routes between Europe and Asia, and partial closures over the past two days.

Some sources attributed it to intense movements of military aircraft of the American-led multinational forces arrayed against Iraq in the Gulf as well as civilian aircrafts being moved to safer "hub stations" elsewhere in the Gulf, away from what was perceived to be the effective range of Iraqi missiles.

Others said Saudi air traffic controllers appeared to be having "trial runs" to assess prospects for a partial or total closure of airspace in the event

of war breaking out after the 0700 GMT Wednesday deadline set by the U.N. Security Council to relinquish Kuwait or face a military assault.

"At this stage there is no indication that the Saudis will announce a total closure of their airspace," said a senior aviation source.

Meanwhile, Saudia, the Saudi national carrier, has suspended its flights to Amman. According to airport sources, the last Saudia flight to Amman before the suspension went into effect landed Monday.

Some of the air corridors through Saudi Arabia were closed for eight hours Sunday evening, and some others were closed Monday, aviation sources said. This resulted in rescheduling of some flights of Royal Jordanian, the national carrier, RJ sources said.

"The closure did not seriously disrupt our regular flights," said an RJ official.

However, the airline announced Tuesday that it was suspending all its flights using Saudi airspace as of Wednesday.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), which is organising charter flights for evacuees from Iraq, has been waiting for several days before it received overflight rights for chartered aircraft across Saudi Arabia, a

senior IOM official said.

An IOM-chartered Aeroflot plane was delayed by over 36 hours at Moscow airport Monday evening awaiting permission for access to Saudi airspace to fly to Amman to pick up Vietnamese evacuees, said Mohammad Yahya Maroofi, chief of station of IOM in Amman.

"The Saudis have now given us permission for five rotation flights to use Saudi airspace," Mr. Maroofi said. The flights would carry about 1,500 Vietnamese who have been stranded in Jordan since last week because of uncertainty of Saudi permission for overflight, he added.

As things stood Tuesday, "We do not expect any disruption of the next four evacuation flights," Mr. Maroofi said.

Another problem facing the IOM is the cancellation of flights beyond the Gulf states, Mr. Maroofi said. "We have in our hands 151 Asian nationals and we are thinking of sending them through alternative routes," he told the Jordan Times.

The options available to the IOM are either to send the evacuees by road to Damascus from where they could catch flights home or send them to Cairo via Aqaba "no matter what we have to do, we have to get these people out of here," he said.

Jordan agrees to Egyptian evacuee plans in case of war

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan has agreed in principle to Egyptian plans to evacuate tens of thousands of its nationals who might flee Iraq if war breaks out in the Gulf, officials and Egyptian diplomats said Tuesday.

Jordan, facing logistical and financial problems, last week closed its border to non-Jordanians fleeing Iraq and Kuwait unless their governments or international organisations guaranteed that they would pay for their trips home. About 7,000 people are waiting on the Iraqi side of the border with Jordan to cross into the Kingdom, security sources said Tuesday. Thousands of them may be Egyptian, the biggest single foreign community in Iraq.

Those fleeing the conflict included about 50 Saudi families, some of whom said they left for the Saudi-Jordanian border after Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's warning Monday that thousands of Saudis would die in a Gulf war, one security source said.

Jordan has allowed in several hundred Bangladeshis, Yemenis and Pakistanis and others whose governments looked after their departure as well as transiting Lebanese and Syrians.

The Jordanian government has been demanding written guarantees from embassies for individual foreigners before allowing them across the border with Iraq, it said.

Officials said Jordan had agreed to provide land transport from the Iraqi-Jordanian border to the Red Sea port of

Aqaba where Egyptian authorities would provide ferries to Egypt's port of Nuweiba on the southern tip of the Sinai peninsula.

Egypt would pay all costs of the evacuation, Jordan since the beginning of the Gulf crisis has cared for 865,000 Third World nationals, who fled Iraq and Kuwait after Baghdad's Aug. 2 invasion.

Ane Egyptian embassy says there are at least 250,000 Egyptian workers still in Iraq while Jordan and U.N. organisations say this figure could exceed one million. About 450,000 of them left after the invasion.

"Between 10,000 to 50,000 of them would leave if war breaks out or military tension increases," an embassy spokesman said.

U.S., U.K. missions deny visa reports

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The American and British embassies in Amman have denied reports about reducing the number of visas issued to people.

According to sources at the American embassy "business is as usual." Although there has been a reduction in the number of staff workers at both the American and British embassies, sources say that this has not affected the embassy's regular work.

On the other hand, Air France, the French airline company, has cancelled two of its flights this week. According to sources no decision has been given about the scheduled flights next week.

Air France joined other carriers companies, such as KLM (the Royal Dutch airline), Lufthansa, Pakistani Airlines and others, in cancelling flights to Amman because of the risks involved in case war erupts, in the region.

CSCC demands penalties for hoarding

AMMAN (Petra) — The Director-General of the Civil Service Consumer Corporation (CSCC) Mohammad Al Abdullat Tuesday demanded that strict penalties be enforced to stop people from hoarding food supplies and urged the concerned authorities to impose controls on the sale of food supplies to stem the present rush at supermarkets and bakeries and other places.

"The present critical circumstances require Jordanians to display a sense of national belonging and keenness on maintaining a solid internal front," said Abdullat in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

"What is required now is rationalising the sale of food supplies on the one hand and combating the greed for consumption displayed on the part of citizens who tend to deprive others of their daily needs," Abdullat added.

In the past three days, Abdullat said people rushed to buy food supplies of every kind far exceeding their requirements for months.

The hoarding tends to prompt people to increase their consumption of food rather than reducing it and this deprives other groups of obtaining their needs, he said.

He said that in the last few days there have been long queues outside bakeries and flour distribution centres and a rush to buy food supplies from the CSCC centres.

In certain cases some people were reported to have hoarded supplies enough for nine months and one citizen was found to have bought five sacks of flour and others have bought 40 kilograms of bread, Abdullat said.

Abdullat said there was also a rush on gas, kerosene and petrol.

Expatriates flee Iraq ahead of U.N. deadline

RUWEISHED (R) — Carloads of refugees from Kuwait fled into Jordan Tuesday, only hours before a U.N. deadline for Iraq's withdrawal from the emirate.

They said those left behind were terrified of dying in a Gulf war. "People are so afraid," said Jordanian Yasser Eid, who travelled two days by road through Iraq from Kuwait in a family convoy of five jam-packed cars.

"They are thinking how will we die, will it be a bomb or something else like chemical weapons," said Eid, 28.

Iraq vowed Monday to fight to the death to retain Kuwait, ignoring a United Nations ultimatum to withdraw from the occupied emirate by 8 a.m. (0500 GMT) on Wednesday or face attack from U.S.-dominated multinational forces.

Barely 12 hours before the deadline, a steady stream of

cars, coaches, camper-vans and, in at least four cases, orange and white Iraqi taxis carried hundreds of exhausted families through this desert customs post.

Mattresses, refrigerators, carpets, suitcases and children's bikes were stacked high on roof racks and some vehicles only just made it.

One battered white Toyota had no windshield, a black BMW had to be towed across the border.

"Whoever has decided to leave should have been here by today," said Jordanian Fadi Mohammad, leaving Kuwait to rejoin his wife and 10-month-old daughter in Amman.

"Most Jordanians who have stayed in Kuwait have done so because they have no money and nowhere else to go," he said.

Mohammad and other travellers echoed earlier reports

that Iraq had stepped up preparations for war in Kuwait, closing bridges, digging trenches and increasing the number of checkpoints.

Jordan's eastern border is the main escape route from Iraq and Kuwait. U.N. officials say 1.5 million people could try to flee if war breaks out.

The Jordanian government last week sealed the border to all but its own nationals and foreigners with funds or proof that their governments and international organisations would pay for their trips home.

Most of those crossing Tuesday were Jordanians and some Syrians and Lebanese with transit visas.

Jordanian officials said 50 Saudi families also crossed the frontier with Saudi Arabia after the prospect of war seemed imminent.

Refugee boy gets ready for a war

By Samia Nakhoul
Reuters

AMMAN — Twelve-year-old Bilal Al Haljab played with his friends for a few hours Monday, said farewell, and got ready Tuesday for a war he thinks will take him home.

"I love Saddam Hussein because he has all the power and he can take us back to Palestine," said Haljab, a Palestinian refugee.

Most Palestinians at Hussein camp said they would welcome war. They back Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein who has linked settlement of the Gulf crisis to Palestinian statehood.

They have cleared bomb shelters built at the impoverished refugee camp where they live but have no special equipment against any gas attack that their neighbours, Iraq and Israel, might trade in a Gulf war.

"Death is the same whether by chemicals or by other things," said Sawssan Nassiba, 18. "Nothing will be worse than this life we're living."

"Let it be a disastrous and catastrophic war for the sake of getting Palestine back," said Younsa Gheit, 40, a mother of 10.

"We bought everything we need so when the war starts we won't need to leave the house," said Haljab at the local cooperative where he was helping his aunt and mother stock up on food in case war erupts in the Gulf.

Haljab queued with dozens of residents stockpiling food a few hours before the expiry of Tuesday's U.N. deadline for Iraq to quit Kuwait or face attack.

"I'm not scared of war, but my little brothers are," said Haljab, a frail boy in faded pants and tattered sweater.

"They watch the television and hear my parents talk about

the war. Now they are terrified. They stay all the time with my mother. They refuse to leave her. If she goes anywhere they cry and want to be with her."

Unlike his elders, Haljab looked cheerful and calm. His main worry seemed not being able to see his friends, whom he said he last saw Monday.

"We played for two hours and then said goodbye. We agreed not to see each other today because war might start and our parents will not allow us to leave the house anyway," he said.

Haljab said his family was now well prepared for war.

"We bought medicines for wounds and burns. We also stocked up on alcohol, bandages, cotton and casts for emergencies."

The boy, like many people interviewed by Reuters, said his family has turned one of their rooms at home into a shelter against chemical weapons attack.

"We did as we saw on television... we sealed the room's windows and doors with plastic sheets. We put in a kerosene lamp and burner, towels and bottles of water to use if they throw chemical weapons on us," he said.

Crowds of women and men flooded into the supermarket on Tuesday. Residents cleared shelves of canned food, milk, rice, cheese, nappies, detergents, alcohol and cotton.

Many of them stocked up on sanitary napkins, saying they could fill them with charcoal and use them as gas masks.

Khaled Kaswani, a 22-year-old farmer queuing for bread, said: "It is the first war I will witness but it was war every day inside me."

"My relatives are being killed every day by the Israelis. Now I am happy that war will happen. It is about time that we get what we lost."

Japan to assist Jordan financially

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Japanese government has responded favourably to Jordan's request for assistance to help the Kingdom cope with the current economic situation resulting from the Kingdom's implementation of the embargo on Iraq and the other adverse economic effects of the Gulf crisis on the country, Minister of Planning Khaled Amin Abdullat announced here Tuesday.

The Japanese government has displayed full understanding of Jordan's economic position, and officials in Tokyo promised to speed up dispersal of promised loans and grants to the Kingdom, the minister said in a statement upon returning to Amman at the end of a seven-day trip to Japan.

The minister said that he met with Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu and other cabinet members to discuss financial assistance, which would be forthcoming through the Japanese Exim (export import) bank, the Japanese International

Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japanese Fund for Overseas Economic Cooperation.

During the meeting, Abdullat explained Jordan's economic situation and the adverse effects on the national economy as a result of the Gulf crisis and its negative effects on the country's balance of payments.

The minister also outlined the Kingdom's evacuee policy and discussed Japanese assistance to enable the country to cope with the expected flood if war breaks out in the Gulf.

Japan expressed readiness to contribute the emergency fund which is being given to Jordan in cooperation with the World Bank, the minister said.

Following the outbreak of the Gulf crisis, Japan allocated a \$2 billion fund for assistance to Turkey, Jordan and Egypt, and last month Abdullat and Japan's ambassador to Jordan Tadayuki Nonoyama signed a memorandum for a Japanese loan of \$83 million to Jordan to finance commodity imports and services.

Jerusalem committee warns of Israeli acts

AMMAN (Petra) — The Popular Committee for the Defence of Jerusalem Tuesday warned of the consequences of Israel's exploitation of the escalation of the Gulf crisis; Israel may carry out massacres against the Palestinian people under occupation, according to Labib Qambawi, the committee's spokesman.

Qambawi said that the assassination of the three Palestinian leaders in Tunis Tuesday morning, was evidence of the organic relation between the American and Zionist plans. The aim of the assassination and its timing was to create a gap within the Palestinian leadership at this sensitive time.

RSS training course concludes

AMMAN (J.T.) — A two-month training course on building materials and soil testing was concluded at the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) last Monday. Seven engineers and technicians from the Republic of Yemen in addition to Jordanians participated in this course.

The course aimed at introducing the participants to the various building materials and asphalt products used in Jordan, and to the technical standards applied to maintain quality control on these products and materials, and the techniques used to assure such quality. The participants were also briefed on the National Building Codes prepared by the centre. The course comprised laboratory and field tests conducted by the participants on building and asphalt products and materials.

Writers protest

AMMAN (Petra) — Members of the Jordanian Writers Association (JWA) Tuesday staged a sit-in at the United Nations premises to voice their full support for Iraq and protest the war in the region.

JWA Vice-President Badr Abdul Haq delivered Mr. Rafik Shukur, the deputy resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme, a letter of protest addressed to the United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar. The letter condemned U.S. actions against the Arab Nation. It also voiced the full support of Jordanian writers for Iraq and the children of Iraq. The letter said the U.S. government's practices constitute a new attack against the Arab Nation, in an effort to weaken their capability, to create better Arab future.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince meets Doi

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan received in his office Tuesday Japanese opposition Socialist Party leader Takako Doi and the delegation accompanying her. Prince Hassan and Doi discussed peace initiatives proposed so far to resolve the Gulf crisis and the latest developments in the crisis. Prince Hassan explained to Doi and the delegation the problems that will face evacuees who will flee Iraq and Kuwait in case of war and stressed that the international community should be ready to extend humanitarian aid to them.

Army marks Arbor Day

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Armed Forces Tuesday celebrated Arbor Day in a ceremony held on the occasion at one of the military camps. The ceremony was attended by Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fathi Abu Taleb who took part in planting trees along with officers and soldiers.

Housing Bank extends hours

AMMAN (Petra) — Working hours at the Housing Bank will be from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. as of Wednesday Jan. 16, according to a decision taken by the bank. The decision is aimed at meeting the demands of people at these critical circumstances, a spokesman for the bank said. The decision was in line with the government's policy and that of the Central Bank of Jordan, he said. The bank's 100 branches throughout Jordan will be working continuously from 8 to 6 non-stop and until further notice.

Maan has enough food

MAAN (Petra) — Maan Governor Qasem Al Farayeh said Tuesday that food supplies in the governorate were available and one citizen was found to have bought five sacks of flour and others have bought 40 kilograms of bread, Abdullat said. Abdullat said there was also a rush on gas, kerosene and petrol.

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New order does not need ashes

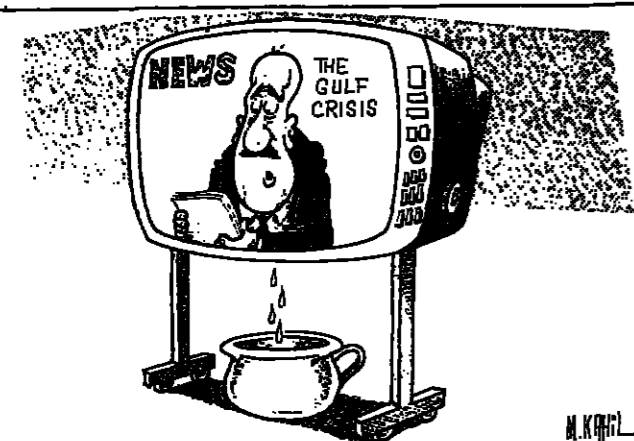
JORDAN has done all it could to spare the region the catastrophes and agonies that war could bring about. His Majesty the King told Jordanians in the final hours of Jan. 15. King Hussein, who until the last minute held hope that war could be averted, stressed that war in itself is the worst of options, because war, he said, and especially this one, would be ugly because of its consequences not only on man himself but his and his future generations' environment.

This has been the King's message for the last five months and because of this Jordan has suffered from the misunderstanding of its brethren.

Jordan, ready to defend its soil against any intrusion, believes that a new world order need not be built on the ruins of Arab cities and in the shadow of Arab oilfields' smoke. This "new" world order will only enhance old animosities and hatreds. A new order should remove the grievances of all the peoples of the region, on top of which are those of the Palestinians.

It is very sad indeed that Jordan's efforts to contain the Gulf crisis and solve it within the Arab house have failed. The King affirmed in his address that the alternative to an Arab solution to the crisis — internationalisation of the issue — has complicated the problem and made it all the more insoluble. It is futile indeed to try to pin blame on this party or the other for this imbroglio. But it is never too late for responsible leaders, leaders of goodwill to spare humanity a war that so far no one seems to want.

If anything, one would hope that by this morning the antagonists would have accepted the French initiative presented at the U.N. Security Council. If by the time of reading this, they would have done so, one expects to see jubilation everywhere, not least among the ranks of all these young people arrayed against each other in the sands of Arabia. Would wisdom evade us at this crucial late hour? We sincerely hope not.



ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily on Tuesday launched a bitter attack on the United States which it said had set Jan. 15 as the date for the massacre of Arab people when it could launch aggression on Iraq. But the Iraqi people, backed by millions of Arabs and Muslims are well prepared, and ready to foil the Zionist colonialist plots hatched on the Arab World, said the paper. It stressed that the Iraqis will not be alone in the battle, and the Muslims from the Arabian Peninsula, Africa, Asia and other regions will be joining the Arab forces of Iraq in the fight against colonialism and against invasion. It said that the holy war against the invaders and warmongers will spread everywhere and will last for years. Those who wanted us dead by Jan. 15 will realise that they have no chance of success and that the Arab World will be turned into a graveyard for the invaders, added the paper. It described the leaders in London and Washington as modern Hitlers intent on evil and on brutality against other peoples of the world. The paper vowed that the Arab people will deal a heavy defeat on the American-led forces which will be denied the oil which they came for because Jan. 15 is not a date for the Arab nation's death, but rather a date of birth of a stronger Arab nation.

Al Dastour for its part said that the responsibility for war in the Gulf lies squarely with the United States president who will go down in history as the maker of destruction and the enemy of peace. The paper said that Washington is clearly waging war to serve the interest of Israel, enabling it to perpetuate its occupation of Palestinian land and enabling it to maintain its strategic superiority over the Arab World put together. A quick revision of the series of events in the region over the past few months reveals clearly that it was the United States which was responsible all the time for the failure to reach a peaceful settlement by placing an embargo on Arab-Arab dialogue, and by building up a huge military force to confront Iraq, the paper noted. It said all the time Washington has been waving its stick in the face of Iraq and has never displayed any flexibility in linking the issues of the Middle East region, and has refused to tackle the Palestine problem on equal footing with that of the Gulf crisis. The United States has been rejecting all ideas coming from Iraq in order to justify its mobilisation of forces vis-a-vis Baghdad over the past five months and has been showing all signs of arrogance and provocation over the Kuwait issue, the paper continued. But, the paper said, Iraq and its people have stood up to America's arrogance and defied the superpower which has mobilised its forces in order to serve Israel's interests.

Ecopolitical Forum

Tale of a president with odd language

IRRESPECTIVE of the materialistic and technological progress it has achieved, the United States has failed to produce a president who is resourceful enough, not to say cultured enough, to write a polite letter to another head of state, Iraq in the present case. This is unjustifiable no matter how deep or bitter his case. This is unjustifiable in opinion with others is. While he is president, Mr. Bush must distance himself from the image of a cowboy who does not differentiate his head from his boots or from his horse. Indeed, the literature published recently by the American press on the Gulf crisis indicated that Mr. Bush strangely went far out of his way to talk about ass-kicking, something that Mr. James Baker himself in the phrase of Newsweek, winced at. Where the words of such a president will lead the world to, is anybody's guess.

Right from the beginning, the American position as expressed by Mr. Bush was shrouded in lies and fooling. First, he said he was dispatching his gunboats, aircraft and guided missiles to defend Saudi Arabia against an imagined Iraqi attack, but has ended up readying his war machine to attack Iraq. Second, he said he was also doing that to guarantee the undisputed flow of Arab oil to the West at reasonable prices. Now no mention is even being made of oil which has been flowing undisturbedly, despite the presence of Iraqi troops in Kuwait. The oil price is still very

reasonable. Anyway, and as the prominent writer A. Schlesinger Jr. argues (WSJ Europe, Jan. 9, 1991), "nothing will more certainly increase oil prices than war, with long-term interruption of supply and wide-spread destruction of oil fields." Of course, any war in the Gulf will be started by Mr. Bush not by any other party. The third major lie was Mr. Bush's allegation that he was zealous for international law and legality, a daring lie amply evidenced by the chronic American negligence of resolutions relating to Palestine.

Now compare the American official position with that of Iraq, which has been crystal clear right from the very beginning. The Iraqis consistently said they would consider pulling out from Kuwait only if the Palestinian question was addressed. Since Aug. 12, they reiterated their position to all parties on all occasions and probably in the same words.

In the press conference he held immediately after the Congress mandated, by an unconvincing majority, the use of force against Iraq, Mr. Bush was extremely arrogant and adamant and insisted that President Saddam had to come to his knees. Mr. Bush used the same odd and reckless language which he used at the outset of the crisis and which has driven the Gulf crisis to where it is today. This article is being written immediately after listening to Mr. Bush's remarks in that conference and one can safely bet that

Mr. Bush's language will invite tough Iraqi reaction, as it always did, and that Mr. Bush's adroitness will be reciprocated by a man with unlimited pride and dignity as President Saddam. Alas, the American president seems to have failed to learn or understand the language of Arabs, Muslims and this part of the world. Sometimes one nice polite word achieves more than a volume of bellicose rhetoric. In the above-mentioned press conference, Mr. Bush was exceptionally euphoric and seemed to be overwhelmed by the mandate he got to wage, notwithstanding the fact that this mandate was practically no more than a licence to shed Arab and American blood.

And right from the beginning, the mass media has had a powerful and detrimental influence on Mr. Bush and his policy towards the Gulf crisis. When he announced on Jan. 3 his overture to meet Tariq Aziz, the ill-intentioned media accused him of blinking first in his personal confrontation with President Saddam. He subsequently had back-pedalled and blew up that overture. During the last two months, the mass media said that President Saddam's strongest weapon was his belief that Mr. Bush would not fight and that he had been bluffing. In the highly personalised atmosphere of the crisis, there is a danger that Mr. Bush will go to war to prove that he has the will to fight.

Assassinations are triple blow to Arafat and PLO

Abu Iyad — a legend throughout the Middle East:

TUNIS (R) — The assassination of two Palestinian leaders in Tunis, Fatah founding member Abu Iyad and PLO operations chief Abu Al Hol, on Monday night is a triple blow to the organisation headed by Yasser Arafat.

It deprives Arafat of two of his closest colleagues, dramatically exposes the remaining divisions in the Palestinian movement and demoralises the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) at a crucial moment in the history of the Middle East.

Abu Iyad, whose real name is Salah Khalaf, and Abu Al Hol (Hael Abdel-Hamid), were shot dead by a PLO bodyguard at Abu Al Hol's house in the Tunis suburb of Carthage. Fakhri Al Omari, an aide to Abu Iyad, was also killed.

No group has claimed responsibility but PLO officials said the gunman had come to Tunis in October 1989 among a group of defectors from the Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) of Palestinian dissident Abu Nidal (Sabri Al Banna).

With Abu Iyad's death, only two out of the five men who founded Fatah with Arafat in Kuwait in the late 1950s and early 1960s are still working alongside him.

One of the founders Khalil Al Wazir (Abu Jihad), was assassinated in Tunis in April 1988, most probably by Israeli commandos. One other, leading moderate Khaled Al Hassan, has withdrawn from PLO activities temporarily because he disagrees with Arafat's strong support for Iraq in the Gulf crisis.

Abu Iyad was not a member of the PLO's 15-man executive committee and had no formal title in the organisation. This belied his importance as de facto head of PLO security, a key figure in deciding policy and a man with wide diploma-

TUNIS. Reuter — His nom de guerre, Abu Iyad, was legend throughout the Middle East.

To the dispossessed in impoverished Palestinian refugee camps, Salah Khalaf, was a hero, the "wise old head," the mastermind behind bold guerrilla operations that thrust the Palestinian issue into world headlines.

To Israelis he was a murderer, one of the most wanted men in the world, forever linked with the 1972 Munich massacre of 11 Israeli athletes.

By the time of his death — by an assassin's bullets in Tunis on Monday night — Khalaf, had mellowed into an avuncular figure, the elder statesman and loyal servant of PLO chief Yasser Arafat.

A cigarette burning away between nicotine-stained fingers, he tended to talk with understatement unlike some of his comrades in the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO).

When it came to security matters, the teacher-turned guerrilla-turned politician, would pause and smile warily. He gave little away.

Khalaf was architect of the security apparatus of Fatah, the

mainstream faction in the PLO, with intelligence sources around the world.

Israel said Abu Iyad was founder and head of "Black September," the Palestine underground group which carried out guerrilla attacks around the world in the early 1970s, including the Munich operation.

"I am responsible politically for security services. I am not a professional," Abu Iyad told Reuters last year.

Abu Iyad was born in 1933 in Jaffa, now a shoddy suburb of Tel Aviv, when it was the main Arab population centre in then British-mandated Palestine.

In May, as the city fell to Jewish forces, he left with his family and met Arafat when the two were students at Cairo University in the early 1950s.

They emigrated together to Kuwait, then a haven for Palestinians and created Fatah around 1960. The first military operations against Israeli targets began in 1965.

Unlike Arafat, Abu Iyad was no diplomat in those days. Close friends say the PLO chief sometimes used his deputy's blunt approaches to send

messages to Arab leaders who failed to support the Palestinian cause.

"They are two faces of the same coin," one PLO insider said, dismissing differences that occasionally portrayed Abu Iyad as a hardliner, opposed to Arafat's "moderation."

Over the past decade, he had supported Arafat's efforts to win a better place for the PLO on the diplomatic stage and promote dialogue with the United States. He travelled the region constantly.

When the Gulf crisis erupted, he shared Arafat's view that it was an opportunity to bring about a comprehensive Middle East settlement.

Khalaf strongly opposed the extreme, breakaway Fatah Revolution Council led by Abu Nidal, which carried out the Vienna and Rome airport attacks, hijackings and waged a murderous internal feud with PLO moderates.

In return Abu Nidal, variously based in Libya and Baghdad, condemned Khalaf to death. First reports of Monday's assassination suggested that Abu Nidal may have carried out the sentence.



Salah Khalaf

PLO officials made no direct accusations on Tuesday but they speculated that the key to the assassination of Abu Iyad and Abu Al Hol, and the murder of Abu Iyad's chief aide Fakhri Al Omari, lay in the bodyguard's associations with Abu Nidal.

A Fatah statement said the killer was an "infiltrated hireling" and his act was one of a "traitor and mercenary," expressions which suggested they

had ruled out any Israeli role.

Abu Nidal broke with the PLO mainstream in 1974 and, in collaboration with Iraq, Syria, Libya and possibly Iraq again, has since pursued a bitter feud with his former boss.

The FRC sentenced Arafat to death for betraying the Palestinian cause and Fatah in turn condemned Abu Nidal to death for assassinating PLO moderates.

Ironically Abu Iyad had

pressed Arafat to track Abu Nidal down and kill him. Arafat opposed this course of action, according to one of Arafat's most authoritative biographies.

Abu Nidal was last reported living uncomfortably in neighbouring Libya, where the authorities had imposed restrictions on his group's freedom of movement.

Arafat's military forces clashed with Abu Nidal's in South Lebanon earlier last year. Arafat's men won the upper hand but failed to eliminate the FRC's armed presence.

Abu Iyad, who put up the FRC dissidents when they defected, had hoped that split in Abu Nidal's organisation would rapidly lead to its disintegration. Fatah might then have taken back members who were truly repentant.

After Monday's killings, that hope is in shatters. The world will inevitably see the Palestinian movement as prone to endemic internal disputes fought out by violence, diplomats said.

It was not immediately clear if the killings were timed to coincide with the last hours before the world chooses between war and peace over occupied Kuwait. It may just have been the bodyguard's first chance to strike at his targets, one PLO official said.

But the PLO is close to the centre of the Gulf crisis, both as an ally of Iraq against the United States and as the potential beneficiary of a last-minute peace deal.

A PLO official in Lebanon has said PLO guerrillas would fight on Iraq's side if war broke out.

"It's no joke, just as you're preparing for battle against what you think is your enemy, to find there's another enemy stabbing you in the back," said the Arab diplomat.

West fears Arab, Muslim reprisals

By Peter Millership
Reuter

LONDON — Allied commanders are preparing for battle in the Gulf but their governments are on alert to face a possible second front, set up by Arab and Muslim guerrillas in their own capitals.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has promised his fighters "hand can reach to harm... aggressors in the whole world."

U.S. President George Bush responded by warning that President Saddam would pay a terrible price for supporting terrorist actions.

Government offices, military bases, embassies, oil depots, power plants, and railway stations could all be possible targets for agents in Arab and non-Arab allied nations, security experts say.

The bullet and the bomb are traditionally used by guerrillas but the experts say security services are not ruling out scenarios that include use of weapons such as nerve gas.

"The prospect of a litre of nerve gas being released in a public place is terrifying," said an expert who declined to be named.

The prospect of airline sabotage has pushed aviation security worldwide to an unprecedentedly high level, according to British Transport Minister Malcolm Rifkind.

The threat will certainly increase in the event of hostilities in the Gulf," said Rifkind.

Saddam's guerrilla spearhead could include members of the mukhabarat secret service, pro-Iraqi Palestinian groups and shadowy Islamic maverick groups, experts say.

A legacy of violence on behalf of Iraq could continue through the coming decade whatever the outcome of a conflict, the experts add.

As the U.N. deadline of Jan. 15 for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait ticked away, the United States and Britain have expelled Iraqi diplomats because of the threat they pose to security.

By tightening security allied governments are anxious not to be caught with their guard down, but some experts see the guerrilla threat as exaggerated.

Efraim Karsh of the department of war studies at King's College, London, said: "Terrorism would not help to get a conference going."

"Saddam is a pragmatist who wants to gain something from any conflict and getting (Palestinians) to bomb cities and airlines would be counter productive."

But airlines and governments see the threat as very real. British Airways, Pan Am and Trans World Airlines have suspended routes to the Gulf because insurance costs have soared.

The United States and Britain have warned citizens about remaining in some Middle East countries. The Greek army is guarding oil refineries. Irish Justice Minister Jay Burke said authorities had new plans to

protect embassies and airlines. Targets in likely priority would be allied bases in the Arabian Peninsula, pro-U.S. Arab officials and then U.S. embassies and airlines in the Middle East and in Europe.

Attacks in Europe are rated possible and strikes in the United States are regarded as less likely, although officials take the danger seriously.

Professor Paul Wilkinson, director of the research institute for the study of conflict and terrorism, could not rule out "some spectacular atrocity" like a nerve gas attack.

The motivation would be to sap public morale and weaken the allied resolve. But most experts said it was most likely that if chemical or biological weapons were used it would be on the battlefield.

Experts say Iraq may be tempted to activate its own agents, already in place as "sleepers," perhaps helped by cells of two experienced Iraqi-backed Palestinian groups.

One is Abu Nidal's Fatah Revolutionary Council. The other is the Palestine Liberation Front led by Abu Abbas who organised the 1985 Mediterranean hijack of the cruise ship Achille Lauro.

The Iraqi mukhabarat secret service and other activities could also be backed up by mavericks. Pro-Iraqi zealot cells unheard of before could spring up, experts say.

"No government can guarantee security," Britain's Rifkind warned.

Crisis exposes limits of the French

By Bernard Edinger
Reuter

PARIS — The Gulf crisis has exposed the limits of France's military capabilities as it considers how to reshape its forces for the next century.

With long experience in rapidly airlifting troops to African trouble spots, France was among the first states to deploy soldiers in Saudi Arabia alongside those of the United States.

The French ground forces in the Gulf are made up of 10,000 hardened professionals, including members of the legendary foreign legion.

"The trouble is we've probably reached the limit of what we can send for the time being even though our army has more than 300,000 men," a senior officer said.

France's problems stem from the desire, rooted in the Gaullist doctrine of national independence, to simultaneously maintain an expensive nuclear strike force, large ground forces in eastern France and Germany and garrisons in friendly African countries.

The difficulties are compounded by France's insistence in maintaining what are effectively two separate armies — a large body of conscripts and a corps of professionals largely reserved for overseas duty.

The United States and Britain long ago turned to all-professional armies but France has insisted on maintaining conscription as a link between the nation and its defenders. Conscripts serve one year in the armed forces.

"The conscripts are meant to

defend French soil and Western Europe in general and cannot be sent outside Europe without parliamentary approval which would probably not be forthcoming in the Gulf case," the senior officer said.

"That means we cannot use the 180,000 conscripts in the army for Gulf duty nor the tens of thousands of career officers and non-commissioned officers, needed to command them," he added.

"On the other hand, we cannot fully commit the 45,000 or so professionals of our rapid intervention force to the Gulf since we need to keep a full parachute division in reserve for Africa where they were more active than ever last year."

Military experts say French paratroops, often without firing a shot, saved the Paris-allied governments of Ivory Coast, Gabon and Rwanda during 1990 alone.

"It's true Britain fielded more men in the Gulf than we did although they have a smaller army but they stripped their forces in Germany to do it and took a long time to arrive on the field," the officer said.

He admitted the British troops, equipped to face a Soviet armoured invasion of Western Europe, arrived in Saudi Arabia with greater firepower than French forces.

"There is no doubt we will have to reorganise our overseas intervention forces as Third World states get better and heavier equipment."

"The policy behind our overseas actions has so far been mostly aimed at getting to trou-

ble spots quickly so we have used much light equipment like armoured cars," the officer said.

The French press noted that when Paris decided to send a heavy tank regiment to Saudi Arabia, it had to assemble young professional soldiers from several largely conscript regiments to make up a full unit.

Chief of Staff General Maurice Schmitt recognised the need for such units when he wrote in the military publication Terre Magazine this month: "Faced with a military challenge like that of Iraq, it is no longer enough to simply have flexible, mobile forces."

France needs "more powerful, better protected units like those the United States has deployed in Saudi Arabia," he wrote.

Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement said he agreed France needed a reorganisation to produce "all-purpose, mobile and more powerful units able to weigh on a crisis right from the start."

These units, to be equipped with new, heavier tanks and sophisticated anti-aircraft missile systems, mean more military spending.

This is of special significance in France since Paris insists on equipping its forces with nationally-produced weaponry while most West European armies use U.S.-made equipment.

"France's problem is that we want armed forces which can do everything but defence gets only 18.66 per cent of the national budget," one officer said. The defence budget in 1991 will be about 200 billion francs (\$38 billion).

King

(Continued from page 1)

becomes even more acute, not only when we compare it to the opposite — peace and stability — but when we contemplate the fact that it may break out in a region rich in oil, the nerve of life and progress. Considering the quantity and types of weapons that will be deployed, this war will not only kill people and give rise to hatred instead of friendship and understanding, but the dangers to the environment are of such a magnitude that they will haunt us and affect our future for generations to come. This is a war against the earth and against everybody and everything on it.

Fellow Jordanians,

For many long decades, our Arab homeland has been deprived of what other nations have gained in terms of security and peace. Likewise our country has always kept aspiring to and working for what others have in the form of a free, dignified life characterised by genuine security and comprehensive peace.

Our region is now on the verge of an abyss as the Gulf crisis evolves into an imminent catastrophe. Despite the horrors of the situation and the pain that wringing our heart... we stand with a clear conscience since I have done all I can possibly do to achieve a political settlement to the Gulf crisis. From the very first hours of the crisis, I acted in accordance with our convictions deprived from our Arab identity and based on loyalty to our nation. We have never wavered from the path we have followed all along, making every effort to build friendship and harmony among the Arab peoples. I have never left a stone unturned in order to enable the single Arab family to stand united on the Gulf crisis in trying to resolve it within the Arab context. We have remained on this path without despairing or isolating ourselves, because the alternative to such an Arab solution was to complicate the crisis by internationalising it or war. We are now hearing the drums of war which are threatening us all with the most dangerous consequences.

I have been anxious to speak to you today, cognizant of the fact that Jordan's location and its stand have kept both our country and our people in the midst of consecutive crises. Such crises have only strengthened our belief in our position and cemented our steadfastness in where we stand against every enemy and conspirator. We preserved our solid unity in the face of all threats and have remained, with the help of God and our people's awareness, a dignified and proud country, a country of glory and sacrifice, unfailing in defending its domain with our hearts and blood.

Together with you I look forward to the triumph of reason over madness, love over hate, and the desire for security, peace and justice over the rush to war and injustice.

I pray to God that these critical moments will be the last moments of suffering and pain in our history and in the history of the whole world, hoping that the doors of evil will close and the doors of goodwill will open so that the hopes of all mothers, fathers, and children, will prevail over the terror that threatens humanity, the environment, and understanding between peoples. It is the people who will be the fodder of a destructive war that is on the verge of starting, leaving no victors in its wake. Real victories are those that protect human life, not those that result from its destruction or emerge from its ashes.

Our country and our region have never been through a more difficult, nor a more critical period than the present one, in which our people live, and with which they interact, under the umbrella of a true and fledgling democracy. Despite the difficulties, the crisis, and the charged emotions, our whole society has behaved with responsibility and awareness that make every member of our Jordanian family proud of this experiment. It is inconceivable that democracy in any country should pass a more rigorous test. If our democracy passes this test safe and sound, then we can truly say that we are a people that has proven its maturity and ability to shoulder responsibility. We have the right to ask everybody, and to expect everybody, to safeguard the purity of this experiment under all conditions, so it can remain a model for our whole Arab region.

I speak to you today, as we stand proud of our achievements, which are the fruits of diligence, endeavour, and shared suffering. These circumstances present our people with one more opportunity to reaffirm, within a context of democracy, unity, and cohesion, their nobility of spirit, magnanimity, and high moral standing. Some of our guests have chosen to stay among us, to share with us our hope in peace and our condemnation of war; they chose to live with us and share our trials. These cherished guests, who decided to remain here at this critical time, see in our country a safe home that deserves their faithfulness. They have always received, and always will receive our affection, care, and attention. Through them our circle of friends will grow, and that of our enemies will recede. Let our guests be welcomed in our hearts in affection and hospitality, as we look with hope to a world of tomorrow that is more secure, more compassionate, and more harmonious.

Fellow Jordanians,

The most glorious hope and sense of optimism are born of a moment of despair. We shall maintain our hope and our optimism. To avoid war would not be a miracle. It is the norm for any people to apply their minds not their guns. Nevertheless, I stress that we, in this Arab country, will always be true in our faith and resolve. We shall always be ready to make sacrifices. Hard times are sent to test people, and we, in this part of the great Arab Nation, have always lived a continuous test, because we live in perpetually difficult times. We shall bow our heads to none but God. No heart in our bosoms, nor limb in our bodies will tremble with fear. We shall face our destiny as we have always known ourselves to be, and as our nation has always known us to be, one impenetrable family, tenacious in confrontation. If forced to fight, we will fight fiercely. Our banner will remain high. Our country will remain secure. Our land and our honour will not be touched while we live.

We are now in the highest state of preparedness to face any situation. Your army, the Arab

army, stands in the front line, proud of its achievements and of the cause for which it has devoted itself, confident that behind it stands the people, solid and alert as another army, as well as the security forces that safeguard our national unity in every sphere. It is an achievement worthy of pride that this country should be deeply united in one trench, that is the front-line of the great nation, as it looks forward to emancipation, unity, and progress.

With the deepest pride I salute the men of our armed forces in the field of honour and sacrifice. There they stand full of faith, to safeguard our country and its sovereignty, and to protect our land and honour. They have pledged before God, in all sincerity, to remain pure in their loyalty, to protect the land and skies of our country, and to prevent anyone whosever from crossing it in any direction whatsoever. This is our beloved country that is cherished by our army and our people. We owe it to our country to give our lives that may live in glory.

"Ye who believe, be steadfast and strive to excel in steadfastness, and be on your guard and be mindful of your duty to God that you may prosper."

May God's peace and blessings be upon you.

Gulf

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Dumas said. "In a few hours we shall have reached the deadline set by the United Nations. As from tomorrow, things will have changed."

The White House said military action was likely "sooner rather than later" if Iraq defied the U.N. deadline to quit Kuwait or face attack.

It expires at midnight Tuesday New York time — 0500 GMT on Wednesday or 8 a.m. Iraq and Kuwait time.

"There's a concern that as we reach that deadline we reach a point of decision," spokesman Martin Fitzwater said. "Sooner rather than later is probably a ready decision."

President Saddam has threatened to make Tel Aviv his first target if war breaks out, whether or not Israel is involved.

The Israeli army advised citizens to prepare a room sealed against chemical attack. Air force pilots were ready to scramble.

France earlier claimed wide backing for its U.N. initiative but said everything hinged on a commitment from Baghdad to end its occupation of Kuwait.

Irrespective of any final word from Iraq, the proposal seemed doomed. Soviet U.N. envoy Yuri Vorontsov told reporters: "The French proposal is not feasible because we know the American position. They are not going to accept it."

The French plan for a Security Council statement would require the consent of all 15 members. Britain and the United States criticised it for effectively conceding Iraqi demands for linkage between the Gulf crisis and the Palestinian issue.

British Prime Minister John Major said the wording of the French plan seemed "to weaken the Security Council resolution." He told a House of Commons debate there was no evidence of Iraq's willingness to withdraw — it had instead built up its forces in Kuwait.

"Chemical weapons... have

been deployed," he said, along with some 600,000 men with 4,000 tanks and 3,000 artillery pieces.

Mr. Major described the issue as "an attempt to eliminate a complete state by a dictator who has shown himself to be a thorough force for evil."

The planned British appeal, supported by the Soviets, would make "a last urgent and solemn appeal" to Iraq to avoid war by quitting Kuwait.

"The Security Council, representing the whole international community, urges him to act accordingly in the interests of his own country and the world," it adds.

Asked if the appeal would include a reference to a Middle East peace conference, British Ambassador David Hannay said it would not include "specifics of that sort."

Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Italy, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt had earlier announced their backing for the French plan. The United States says linkage would reward Iraq for aggression.

In other Gulf developments: — Three U.S. navy aircraft carriers and a U.S. marine amphibious force have joined the air and naval fleet arrayed against Iraq, navy sources said.

The 72,800-ton USS Theodore Roosevelt and the 60,300-ton USS America passed through the Suez Canal from the Eastern Mediterranean Monday and Tuesday.

The 50,000-ton USS Ranger reached the Arabian Sea coming from the Philippines, the sources said.

The deployment brings to six the number of aircraft carriers in the U.S. fleet in the Gulf, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Oman.

— Former U.S. Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger said he had changed his mind about U.S. Gulf strategy and now favours a rapid military attack rather than reliance on sanctions to expel Iraq and Kuwait.

"I think we can do it; I think we should do it, and I think it's vital that we do it," Weinberger said. "The costs of doing it are far less than the costs of not doing it."

— Syria's ruling National Progressive Front met under the chairmanship of President Hafez Al Assad Tuesday to discuss the Gulf crisis.

The front, which includes several political parties allied with the ruling Baath party, has the authority to decide on matters of war and peace.

Officials said a statement was to be issued after the meeting.

— Chinese Premier Li Peng has warned that many countries would suffer from a Gulf war and urged continued peace efforts, the official New China News Agency said.

Li was speaking in talks with visiting Romanian President Ion Iliescu.

"Once a war broke out in the Gulf the consequences that would arise from it would be very grave, very cruel," the agency quoted Mr. Li as saying.

He warned that the possible destruction of the Gulf oil fields would bring losses to many countries.

— An Iraqi government official said Monday that Baghdad's problem with withdrawing its troops from Kuwait was the timing of a pullout but the "concept" of doing so under a deadline, the Cable News Network (CNN) reported.

Abu Iyad

(Continued from page 1)

pursue the sacred struggle," said the communiqué.

The slaying came hours before an interview with Abu Iyad appeared in an Algerian newspaper where he expressed doubts about linking the Palestinian problem with Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

"I don't want my own cause associated with the destruction of the Arab region," he was quoted as saying. "We are really caught between two fires."

Mr. Arafat, who aborted a trip to Paris to consult with French leaders about Gulf peace proposals, returned to Baghdad Tuesday after talks in Amman.

The slayings brought denunciations from Palestinians around the Middle East, many of whom pointed fingers of blame at Israel. Arafat ordered PLO guerrillas in Lebanon to go on "maximum alert."

Palestinian sources said Abu Zeid had come to Tunis from Libya posing as a defector from the Abu Nidal group which opposes the PLO's moderate leadership.

The three men were killed at Mr. Abdul Hamid's villa in the Carthage when the gunman burst into a room where they were meeting and riddled them with bullets from an automatic weapon.

The Fateh statement said the three were "victims of the bullets of traitors and collaborators," terms often used by Fateh to describe Abu Nidal supporters.

It said the assassination was the work of "an agent who infiltrated the bodyguard of brother Hayel Abdul Hamid last night at about 2300 hours (2200 GMT) and surprised them by firing an automatic weapon he carried."

"Preliminary investigations have shown that the assassin is linked to a treacherous collaborating party, and the Palestinian leadership will give the Palestinians details of the crime as soon as the investigation is terminated," it said.

PLO sources in Tunis and the organisation's United Nations ambassador, M. Nasser Al Kidwa, blamed the killings on Israel, which denied involvement.

"The Israelis are the only ones which gain interest through such terrorist actions," the ambassador said.

Israeli sources acknowledge that Israel was responsible for the April 16, 1988 attack that killed Khalil Al Wazir, the deputy military commander of the PLO.

Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens emphatically denied that Israel was behind the Tunis killings.

"The answer is definitely no, we had nothing to do with it," he said on the U.S. ABC-TV programme "Nightline."

"I think it was probably the work of some dissident faction in the PLO," Mr. Arens said. "We here are busy preparing ourselves just in case Saddam Hussein makes good on his threats against Israel."

A wave of anti-Israel anger swept through the Arab World Tuesday after the assassinations. Many Palestinian leaders immediately blamed Israel for the deaths.

Abbas Zaki, a Central Committee member of Fateh, the PLO group founded by Mr. Arafat and Abu Iyad, charged that the assassination "was planned and implemented by the Israeli

Mossad (intelligence agency) and was timed to coincide with the Jan. 15 deadline to affect the morale of the Palestinian people and the Arabs."

The Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine vowed that "Palestinians will take revenge... Israel will not be able to stop the struggle of the Palestinian people."

Egypt also condemned "the brutal and treacherous assassinations."

Anti-Arafat PLO factions also decried the slayings of two men who had been founders of the modern Palestinian guerrilla struggle.

Spokesmen for the anti-Arafat Popular Struggle Front, Fateh uprising and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command all blamed Israel.

More mainstream Palestinian groups also blamed Israel.

"Palestinians will take revenge... Israel will not be able to stop the struggle of the Palestinian people by such acts," vowed the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, one of the three largest PLO factions.

Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

Another woman with a sleeping baby on her shoulder was weeping and said, "every time someone raises his head high, they kill him."

Leaders of the Baqa'a camp, the largest in Jordan with a population of 100,000, announced three days of mourning but ruled out closing shops "because at such a time, people need to buy supplies in case of emergency."

Foreign journalists, who rushed to the camp expecting to find angry demonstrations, found a silent march and low spirits at the camp with the largest concentration of Palestinian refugees. Some residents of the camp advised Western journalists not to go to the camp saying it was possible that violence could be used against them.

"The people are so fed up with the West and Westerners that they're not exactly in the mood to see any of them here," said a Baqa'a camp doctor. However, no incidents against foreign journalists were reported.

"The people here are in a state of shock over the assassinations, especially at such a time," said one of the camp's leaders who goes by the name of Abu Kifah.

He said he and many of the residents of the camp were convinced that the Israelis carried out the killings.

"The assassinations, carried out by the enemy, are aimed at provoking problems within the Palestinians' unified ranks and leadership," Abu Kifah said.

Expelled Palestinian lawyer Ibrahim Bakr described the assassinations as "very tragic and depressing, especially that they coincided with the (Gulf) deadline."

Bakr said that the three Palestinians who died in Carthage just outside Tunis were "the first martyrs of the campaign waged against the Arab Nation."

For Palestinians, Abu Iyad, who was head of military security, symbolised the armed struggle for liberating Palestine, something that has been widely welcomed from a

Palestinian population who had given up hope on finding a diplomatic solution to the Palestinian problem.

During a recent visit to Jordan, Abu Iyad, a co-founder of Fateh, attracted thousands of people in different auditoriums in Amman as he spoke in support of a Palestinian armed struggle.

"Everyday the Israelis commit massacres against our people in Palestine and nothing is happening. They need missiles to stop them," Abu Iyad had told a cheering crowd of 8,000 on Jan. 1 commemorating Fateh's 26th anniversary.

"We have used arms in our resistance and we have also used politics. We have given concessions, but what have we gotten in return except more killings of our people?" he had asked.

"It seems that the armed struggle is the only language they (Israelis) understand."

"They (Israelis) killed our good leaders and with Abu Jihad (Khalil Wazir who was assassinated in April 1988) and now Abu Iyad gone, we only have Abu Ammar (Yasser Arafat) left," said a mourner at the Baqa'a march.

Several Palestinians feared that the founders of the Palestinian revolutionary movement would all be "liquidated," and they criticised the carelessness of the Palestinian leadership in safeguarding their lives and security.

"It's unbelievable that the assassination took place right in front of the home of the head of the security (Abdul Hamid) by someone hired by him," said an angry Palestinian.

Syria

(Continued from page 1)

Jordan's sovereignty, and political entity.

Addressing an international exhibition in Cairo, Baz said: "We are very keen on keeping Israel out of this crisis. However, we want it to cooperate with us in finding an end to the sufferings of the Palestinian people."

"Israel has no right to become a party to the Gulf crisis and if it does then its intervention will be meant to further undermine and split the Arab situation."

He said Egypt had from the very first day told the United States that it did not want any role for Israel in the Gulf crisis.

"Israel should keep itself away from the Gulf crisis because if it involves itself then it means that it does not want to contribute to establishing peace with the Arab countries."

Formal ties

(Continued from page 1)

Qasem was replaced by Taher Al Masri in a cabinet reshuffle in early January.

Chances for a visit to Jordan by the Iranian health minister have receded following the dismissal by the Iranian Majlis of Iraj Fazel, the minister who had accepted an invitation extended in October. President Hashemi Rafsanjani has named only a caretaker minister as Fazel's replacement, Reza Malek Zadeh.

Fazel, who was ousted with a 115-114 vote in the Majlis, was the personnel physician of the late revolutionary pat-

riarch, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and his acceptance of the Jordanian invitation was seen as an indicator of Tehran's keen desire to resume formal relations with Jordan.

In the absence of diplomatic relations, Pakistan has been looking after the interests of the two countries through its missions in Tehran and Amman.

Jordanian-Iranian trade is expected to pick up following the resumption of relations. In 1987, 1988 and 1989, trade was only one way, with Jordanian imports from Iran growing from JD 296,400 in 1987 to JD 1.125 million in 1988 and JD 2.015 million in 1990.

Figures available for the period between January and October 1990 show that Jordan exported goods — mainly yeast, paint, household plastic products, clothes and shoes — worth about JD 790,000, and imported Iranian products — mostly nuts, water melon and melon seeds, raisins and carpets — worth JD 1.372 million. Most of the trade was conducted overland via Turkey and Syria.

Several Jordanian parliament members and political activists have visited Tehran in recent months, particularly after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August.

The hardline Iranian leadership had initially refused to acknowledge the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood as a legitimate Islamic movement, saying it represented only an arm of the monarchy.

However, Mr. Velayati, in his meeting with Mr. Qasem at the U.N. in September, had acknowledged that a genuine democratic process was under way in Jordan following the general elections held in November 1989, according to sources who were close to the meeting.

RJ flights

(Continued from page 1)

The extra insurance charges had earlier prompted RJ to impose an extra fee on each passenger at the rate of \$30 for Gulf and Middle Eastern destinations; and \$50 for other destinations, and has forced the national airline to station some of its aircraft abroad. Mr. Abu Ghazaleh, explained.

In addition, he said, an extra insurance charge will be imposed on goods exported by air at the rate of 500 fils per kilogramme except for Jordanian agricultural products and medicines for which RJ will charge 200 fils per kilo.

Mr. Abu Ghazaleh said the extra charges on goods and passengers cover only part of the total amount of insurance paid by the national airline under the current circumstances.

He said that insurance companies were charging \$500,000 on RJ's four Tristar planes every 48 hours, and \$165,000 extra insurance charge on three Boeing 727 aircraft every 24 hours.

These figures, he said, reflect the huge sums paid by RJ to insurance companies. He noted that foreign airlines operating in the Middle East have imposed double the insurance charges imposed by RJ.

Mr. Abu Ghazaleh said that the extra insurance charges were essential to ensure continued RJ's operations under the present difficult circumstances.

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London, European markets gird for war, vow to keep trading

LONDON (R) — London financial markets have put themselves on a war footing but vowed to maintain "business as usual" throughout the chaotic trading of a Gulf conflict would cause.

"The exchange and its member firms are adamant the market should remain open and trading continue for all stocks," a spokesman at London's International Stock Exchange said.

Trading in oil futures — likely to soar just as stocks may drop if war breaks out — would also be kept going with no limits to price movements.

But markets did plan measures to ensure that players covered financial exposure. They might order pauses if trading is wild.

European financial markets also prepared for a conflict in the Gulf. French stock traders said they were braced for the largest sell-off since the October 1987 market crash.

The French stock market authority said existing circuit breakers could handle such a fall and brokers said a crisis management team led by the Caisse des

Depôts was ready to intervene if the bottom fell out of the stock market.

Italy's bourse chairman, Attilio Ventura, suggested that authorities should suspend Milan stock trading if war broke out and information about the conflict became confusing.

The Italian bourse regulatory authority, Consob, could temporarily suspend trading but a decision to shut the market indefinitely could only be taken by Italy's treasury.

Officials at the Zurich and Madrid stock markets felt their current trading regulations would be adequate to safeguard transparent and liquid trading in event of war.

Zurich's open-outcry bourse could delay the start of trading or suspend it for 30 minutes if it considered such action would promote better information in the market.

Trading in any one stock in Madrid's computerised "continuous" market is automatically stopped for an hour if its price

risers or falls by 15 per cent from the previous close. Price movements are limited to 20 per cent per session.

In Oslo, the bourse said it was unlikely to impose restrictions if war broke out and a spokesman for the Amsterdam Stock Exchange said it was prepared for any market volatility but he declined to elaborate.

U.K. banks ordered their own precautions to avoid being hurt in the huge, unregulated foreign exchange and interbank markets.

London foreign exchange trading can be worth a staggering \$190 billion on a busy day. Various London markets disclosed war plans Monday.

"If prices are moving really quickly, we may call a fast market," said a stock exchange spokeswoman. A fast market means market-maker screen quotes on share prices are only indicative.

Trading hours of 0830 to 1645 GMT might be extended. The London Clearing House (LCH) which clears and guaran-

tees trades in British futures markets is ready to raise margins — deposits on all futures and options contracts — if necessary.

The clearing house is owned by six British clearing banks and is backed by a guarantee of £150 million (\$300 million).

It has already announced higher margins on some markets. Most margins on the London International Financial Futures Exchange (LIFFE) were raised Tuesday by 50 per cent.

The International Petroleum Exchange said London oil futures trading would not stop but could pause if gyrations are wild.

Banking concern focuses on foreign currency operations among worldwide treasury operations which could come under pressure if nervous players begin withdrawing funds from the market.

The Bank of England (central bank) has agreed guidelines with the banks on liquidity ratios but has not issued any new directives since the Gulf crisis began.

Gulf crisis may sweep African growth away, top economist says

ADDIS ABABA (R) — The Gulf crisis threatens to sweep away what little economic growth Africa made in the last three years in a continent beset by famine, wars, debt and declining commodity prices, a top economist said Monday.

Adebayo Adedeji, head of the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), said that Africa's economy grew by three per cent in 1990, slightly faster than in the two previous years.

But he said the continent's barrage of economic problems would be compounded by the Gulf crisis.

"In 1991, it is not only the weather situation that matters or the pursuit of domestic reforms and sound management," he said at a news conference.

"Equally crucial is the issue of how and when the Gulf crisis is resolved and the impact on the petroleum market," he added.

Despite positive growth rates, population increases of three to 3.2 per cent a year meant per capita gross domestic product (GDP) growth declined in 1990

by 0.2 per cent.

"This means in effect that the average African economies, for the twelfth successive year, will continue to get poorer," Adedeji said.

The growth of agriculture by 3.4 per cent in 1990 accounted for most of the overall increase in GDP.

But perversely, larger food harvests coincided with what threatens in 1991 to become the worst famine in African history.

Starvation brought on by drought and wars in countries such as Sudan, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Liberia means that food aid requirements in 1990-91 will be far above the 4.2 million tonnes needed in the previous year.

But Adedeji said food imports to Africa declined 12 per cent to 15.9 million tonnes in 1990, partly because of the international community's diversion of aid to eastern Europe.

ECA figures cover the entire continent except for white-ruled South Africa.

The ECA executive secretary blamed sluggish growth in 1990 on external factors such as the continent's foreign debt, which rose to \$271.9 billion, 4.7 per cent higher than in 1989.

"There is a need for a more radical approach to solving Africa's debt crisis, one that will significantly reduce both the stock of debt and annual debt servicing costs," he said.

The former Nigerian planning minister also called for an easing of the eligibility rules for debt relief.

This would mean softer conditions for those countries implementing austere International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank structural adjustment programmes.

He said the value of Africa's exports rose in 1990 to \$71.9 billion from \$62.7 billion in 1989, and would have been higher if world prices for commodities such as cocoa and coffee had not fallen.

Adedeji said the continent's overall growth rate masks considerable variations. He pointed

to Africa's seven-oil producing economies which earned an additional \$10.5 billion in 1990 due to oil price increases alone.

This helped push up growth rates of these countries to an average of 3.5 per cent.

For non-oil exporting nations extra costs for importing fuel amounted to \$2.7 billion and their average GDP growth rate was only 2.5 per cent.

He said the global economic impact of the Gulf crisis also constrained demand for Africa's exports.

Africa's manufacturing sector registered growth of five per cent in 1990, up from 4.3 per cent in 1989, due to reforms which have liberalised trade.

But higher cost of oil inhibited mining output, which grew only 2.2 per cent in 1990, down from 2.4 per cent in 1989.

"The prices of all major non-fuel mineral products notably declined in 1990, marking an end to the metals boom of 1987-89," Adedeji said.

Kuwait to weigh selling assets if Gulf war erupts

LONDON (R) — Kuwait's central bank governor denied market rumours Monday that his country's government had begun liquidating assets, but he conceded it might have to do so if war broke out in the Gulf.

Sheikh Salem Abdul Aziz said liquidation could only drive financial markets lower and thereby harm the Kuwait Investment Office (KIO), which manages some \$100 billion in state holdings.

"So far we don't feel we have to liquidate," the governor told Reuters in an interview. "We don't want to hurt the markets, to hurt ourselves."

But he added: "The longer it takes (to resolve the Gulf crisis), the more possible for liquidation."

Last Thursday's announcement of the sale of a KIO interest, a Spanish-owned oil company, sparked market speculation that the Kuwaiti authorities

had started liquidating assets. The company, Ertol, belonged to Spain's largest chemicals group Ercros S.A. Ercros is 39 per cent owned by Grupo Torras S.A., which in turn is controlled by the KIO.

But Al Sabah said the decision to sell Ertol, which fetched for 46 billion pesetas (\$475 million), was taken about eight or nine months ago in a restructuring of the KIO's industrial investments.

PIA suspends some flights to Mideast

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — State-owned Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) said Tuesday it was suspending flights to six cities in the Middle East from Wednesday because of fears of war in the Gulf.

The cities are Riyadh, Dhahran, Bahrain, Amman, Doha and Damascus.

Scheduled services to Jeddah, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Muscat would continue, an airline spokesman said.

He said the decision was taken to protect the safety of passengers after PIA "considered the uncertain conditions in the Middle East and the Gulf region."

The airline had been hit hard by high insurance rates.

"Only a part of this huge amount has been passed on to the passengers and the rest has been borne by the airline itself, making the whole operation excessively uneconomical," the spokesman said.

Flights would resume "as soon as the utmost safety of flights and passengers is ensured," he said.

Ukrainian miners demand higher prices for coal

MOSCOW (R) — Miners in the big Ukrainian coalfields have threatened to halt shipments unless Moscow raises state coal prices to help the producers keep their purchasing power in a budding Soviet market economy.

A miners' spokesman said Friday that the general directors of mines across the big Donbass coalfield had sent a telegram to President Mikhail Gorbachev warning they were prepared to cut off supplies from Jan. 10.

"With the beginning of market relations from Jan. 1, we cannot put our coal under our own control. We do not know how to strike deals with our consumers," he said by telephone from Donetsk.

Soviet miners, who paralysed the economy in July 1989 to win a series of economic and political concessions from Moscow, say only higher prices for their coal will allow them to meet the

higher prices they must now pay for other goods.

"Contracts with consumers of coal have been concluded without taking into account the new prices, while deals with suppliers of equipment and material have been made at the new prices," the independent Postfactum news agency quoted the telegram as saying.

"All this creates tensions in the workforce and failure to take proper decisions will bring about the closure of the mines in January 1991. We hereby inform you that on Jan. 10 all the mines will stop coal deliveries pending decisions on prices," it added.

Similar telegrams were sent to Ukrainian leaders and to Soviet Coal Minister Mikhail Shchadov, the spokesman said, adding the Donetsk miners were seeking support in the big Siberian Kuzbass coalfields and other mining regions.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES		
Tuesday, January 15, 1991		
Central Bank official rates		
U.S. dollar	Buy	Sell
Pound Sterling	660.0	671.0
Deutschemark	1267.0	1274.6
Swiss franc	431.7	434.3
French franc	519.6	522.7
Japanese yen (for 100)	127.2	128.0
Dutch guilder	492.6	495.6
Italian lire (for 100)	382.9	385.2
Spanish peseta (for 100)	116.3	117.0
Belgian franc (for 10)	21.0	21.3

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES		
Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.		
One Sterling	1.9050/60	U.S. dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.1480/90	Canadian dollar
	1.5423/30	Deutschemarks
	1.7370/80	Dutch guilders
	1.2872/79	Swiss francs
	31.72/77	Belgian francs
	5.2340/2390	French francs
	1159/1160	Italian lire
	135.60/70	Japanese yen
	5.7260/7310	Swedish crowns
	6.0235/95	Norwegian crowns
	5.9410/60	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	398.25/75	U.S. dollars

Saudi Arabia may start oil shuttle in case of war

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, might start shuttling supplies to tankers outside the Gulf if war frightens shipowners away from the waterway, oil and shipping sources said.

"Saudi Arabia cannot afford to stop oil production. In case of a war, they might start ship-to-ship transfer outside the Gulf," said one Western shipping company executive in the region.

Shipping sources said they did not expect Iraq to mount an attack on tankers in the waterway because of the armada of Western warships patrolling the area. But loading terminals on the Gulf coast might be vulnerable to missile and air attacks.

"So far major oil companies have not changed plans to send tankers into the Gulf, they are paying high insurance costs, but they continue loading" (from Saudi Arabia), an oil company executive said.

Iraq has vowed to destroy oilfields and facilities on the Arabian Peninsula if U.S.-dominated forces massed in the Gulf mount an attack.

"There are tanker owners willing to take the risk of running shuttle services under dangerous conditions," one shipping executive in the Gulf said. "They use absolute rust-

buckets which should go to scrapyard, but they do the job."

Shipping sources in the Gulf said more than 70 vessels, most of them crude and oil product tankers, were anchored off the United Arab Emirates (UAE) outside the Gulf, waiting to pick up cargoes or to be chartered.

"These vessels could quickly be put into any kind of shuttle service," one tanker operator in the Gulf said.

Saudi Arabia's oil output is now estimated at 8.5 million barrels per day (b/d) or one-sixth of the western world's needs. It has raised production by almost three million b/d since last August to make up for most of the crude lost to the market after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait last August.

Oil analysts believe that prices might soar to more than \$60 if the flow of crude out of the Gulf comes to a halt because of hostilities. Oil prices have shot up more than \$3 in the past two days amid fading hopes of peace.

Price of Brent crude for February delivery was on offer in London Tuesday for \$29.80 per barrel, 50 cents above Monday's close.

Oil industry sources said apart from Saudi Arabia's contingency plans for a shuttle to keep sup-

plies going, floating crude stores in the Caribbean and northwest Europe could be used to feed the market in case of disruptions.

Shipping sources said tankers were still heading for the Saudi oil terminals at Ras Tanunrah and Juaymah to load up even though insurance rates were raised again last Friday.

"As of Tuesday there are three tankers at Ras Tanunrah and Juaymah," one oil industry executive in the Gulf said. "There is no ship scheduled to load Wednesday, but a couple of tankers are expected to arrive Thursday and Friday."

The kingdom also has a pipeline with a capacity of 3.2 million b/d to the Red Sea port of Yanbu from the oil fields on the Gulf coast. But at the moment it supplies only a light grade of crude; most Saudi exports consist of medium- and heavy grades.

Oil industry sources said running a shuttle service from the Saudi oil terminals to safer waters off the UAE was an easy operation, as shown by Iran during its 1980-88 war with Iraq.

They said Iran had managed to keep its oil exports going with tankers running through "Exocet alley" — Iraqi jets firing missiles at any large object moving along the Iranian coast.

UAE exchange house ordered not to deal in Kuwaiti dinar

DUBAI (R) — The central bank ordered money exchange houses in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) last week not to deal in Kuwaiti dinars after a busy market developed for the currency, dealers in Dubai said.

"It seems they (central bank) had difficulty in keeping a track of money stolen in Kuwait after the (Iraqi) invasion," one dealer at an exchange house in Dubai said.

He said before the last week's central bank crackdown, Kuwaiti dinars purchased in the UAE were taken to Saudi Arabia, where the rate was better than in Dubai.

One Kuwaiti dinar, which had fetched over 12 UAE dirhams before the invasion, became worthless after Aug. 2, but climbed first to four dirhams and then to eight dirhams as Gulf states took measures to help the exiles by accepting a limited amount of their currency, dealers said.

Iraq had declared the Kuwaiti currency at par with its dinar after the invasion, effectively devaluing it to one twelfth of its value.

China vows to control money supply, reform state enterprises

BEIJING (R) — China's top central banker has vowed to clamp down on money supply growth as China's economic recovery is threatened by the spectre of renewed inflation and a fiscal crisis caused by crippling losses in state enterprises.

Li Guixian, president of China's central bank, the People's Bank of China, told a banking conference that tight controls had to be put on money supply growth, reversing a credit loosening started last year to boost struggling industrial production.

"The central bank has set lending quotas for all the banks in the country to guarantee the money-supply ceiling for this year," the official China Daily newspaper said Tuesday.

Lending quotas were mandatory and should be strictly observed, the newspaper quoted Li as saying. He declined to disclose the exact figures.

The policy appears to reverse one announced by Premier Li Peng last July aimed at stimulating lagging production.

That plan included lower interest rates and more loans.

"It's just a stop-and-go economy," one Chinese economist said. "It's the only method they have."

The currency would be kept stable, the New China News Agency quoted Li as saying.

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World condemns Soviet bloody crackdown in Lithuania

LONDON (Agencies) — President Mikhail Gorbachev's lengthy honeymoon with the West appeared to be over as world leaders condemned the Soviet army's bloody crackdown on Lithuania.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said Monday that military action against independence activists in Lithuania raises fears the Soviet Union is retreating into "its Stalinist shell."

Hurd met in Brussels with other European Community foreign ministers to discuss how they should react to the Soviet moves. Some foreign ministers called for a suspension of European assistance for the Soviet economy.

But German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher ruled out cutting off German aid to Moscow as a response to the Soviet crackdown in the Baltics.

A national campaign was launched in Norway to offset the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize award to Gorbachev by giving an alternate peace prize to the Lithuanian president, Vitautas Landsbergis.

In Tokyo, the Foreign Ministry summoned Ambassador Ludvig Chizhov Monday to express Japan's concern over the Soviet action, an official said.

The Danish and Swedish governments summoned Soviet ambassadors Sunday. On Monday, Sweden's National Handball Federation withdrew its world champion team from a tournament in the Soviet city of Minsk in protest.

Gorbachev said Monday that a local military command ordered the use of deadly force in Lithuania and that he learned about the assault on the republic's main broadcast facility afterward.

Before Gorbachev's statement, Hurd said Soviet authorities were not taking the patient

road of discussions with the Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians.

"Instead of doing that, they are going back to the old road of '66, '68 and so on in other tragedies and trying to decide these matters by force, by tanks, by soldiers," Hurd said in Brussels in an interview with British Broadcast Corp. (BBC) radio.

"I don't see how we could continue with the kind of programmes of help for reform in the Soviet Union... if the Soviet Union has turned its back on the West and on the ideas of reform and gone back into its Stalinist shell."

Soviet troops killed 14 people and injured more than 160 Sunday when they stormed a television station in Lithuania to reassert control over the republic, which has been in a 10-month-old standoff with the Kremlin over its independence declaration.

U.S. President George Bush Sunday appealed to Soviet leaders to stop the violence or risk rupturing the new superpowers partnership. Bush declined to say whether he would still go to Moscow next month for a summit to sign a nuclear arms treaty.

U.S.-Soviet relations nurtured by Bush and Gorbachev over the past year are in danger of unravelling.

Now a superpower summit scheduled for Feb. 11-13, the latest in a series of high-profile meetings that had almost become routine, is up in the air.

And the White House said Monday U.S. economic assistance to Moscow is under review.

Landsbergis called on Bush to make a strong statement of support for Lithuania in a December visit to Washington, but all the White House could muster was a lukewarm statement reiterating U.S. opposition

to Moscow's 1940 annexation of Lithuania.

The crackdown forced a harsh condemnation by Washington and prompted Bush to reconsider his plans for a summit.

"Clearly, the trip to Moscow is up in the air," White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said. "I think there's a general scepticism now that we would go. But the final decision has not been made and will not be made for some time."

The Lithuanian charge d'affaires, Stasys Lozoraitis, said cancelling the February summit was not necessarily a good idea because a dialogue would be useful. But in this case he said he would urge Bush against going at this time.

Fitzwater said the economic assistance advocated by the administration to help Moscow could be altered if the current crackdown continues.

"This situation is under review," Fitzwater said. "We don't want to unduly alarm people."

"We've made no decision at this time, but the president has clearly said that our relationship is at stake and the only real tools that we have are the economic opportunities that have been granted," Fitzwater said.

"They are the avenues that we could pursue," he said.

Two influential senators, Republican leader Robert Dole and Democratic Senator Robert Byrd, urged Bush to suspend \$1 billion in export credits to the Soviet Union.

Bush condemns violence

Bush called the deaths of 14 Lithuanians in a Vilnius television station stormed by tanks and paratroopers "a great tragedy" that threatens to throw improving U.S.-Soviet relations off course.

"I ask the Soviet leaders to refrain from further acts that might lead to more violence and more loss of lives," said Bush.

"We condemn these acts, which could not help but affect our relationship," he said. "There is no justification for the use of force against peaceful and democratically elected governments."

Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens earlier warned the violence in Lithuania could jeopardise the European Community's \$1-billion aid programme for the Soviet Union.

Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen called for the freezing of economic cooperation measures with the Kremlin until the community receives assurances of no more use of force.

The Nobel prize has never been retracted, but Norwegian newspapers, churches, humanitarian groups and political leaders joined in an appeal for contributions for an alternate people's peace prize for Landsbergis.

Although the Norwegian Nobel Committee is bound by tradition not to comment on the actions of a laureate or endorse an alternate prize, some members lamented the use of force and support an alternate prize, said committee secretary Geir Lundestad.

"With what is now happening in Lithuania, it is beginning to approach the point that I think the Nobel Committee should send a message to Gorbachev," said committee member Kaare Sandegren in a newspaper interview.

Genscher reiterated Bonn's demand that the Soviets refrain from using force, but told Saarländischer Rundfunk Radio he rejected cutting off German aid to the Soviets in response.

He said much of the aid was promised in new German-Soviet treaties in which Moscow has pledged to remove its troops from former East Germany within four years.

"We will remain faithful to these treaties, because we want the Soviet Union to be faithful to the treaties, especially when it concerns the withdrawal of Soviet troops," Genscher said.

The German government and banks in the country have promised the Soviets about \$19.7 billion in various forms of assistance.

Japan's chief cabinet secretary Misoji Sakamoto said Monday: "We cannot approve of this kind of military activity and have a deep sense of anxiety."

Asked whether Japan might halt its emergency supplies of food to the Soviet Union, Sakamoto said: "It is necessary to watch the situation."

Church bells tolled and tens of thousands massed in towns across Sweden Monday in protest. There were demonstrations throughout the Nordic nations.

The prime minister of Iceland, Finlayson, Sweden, Norway and Denmark, in a joint letter to Gorbachev, asked him to ensure authorities "refrain from further use of force."

NATO warns Moscow

NATO warned Moscow Monday a continued crackdown in the Baltic republics would damage East-West relations and called for negotiations between the Soviet authorities and the rebel republics.

NATO sources said everything from arms control and a planned superpower summit next month to newly-established diplomatic links with the alliance's former cold war foe could be at risk — although no specific measures had been agreed so far.

The Soviet ambassador to Belgium, Nikolai Afanassievsky, requested an urgent meeting with NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner to explain the situation, the sources said.

A strongly-worded NATO statement, issued after a crisis meeting of ambassadors from the 16 allied nations, condemned the use of force in Lithuania.

"The continuation of these alarming developments, in particular the use of force, would have negative consequences for the political situation in Europe as a whole and on (allied) relations with the Soviet Union," it said.

"The member nations of the Atlantic alliance are deeply concerned by developments in the Baltic republics," the NATO statement said. "Allies strongly condemn the use of violence by the Soviet Armed Forces and actions to undermine the democratically elected authorities of Lithuania."

NATO repeated its support for "the expectations and legitimate aspirations of the Baltic peoples" and urged a solution to the crisis based on negotiations. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were taken over by the Soviet Union in 1940.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl expressed deep concern about the future of Gorbachev's reform policies which he said had brought the Soviet Union great international respect and opened promising prospects for cooperation.

"Our great goal remains the building of an all-European peace order benefiting all the countries and peoples of our continent," he said. "The events in Vilnius were a major setback on this road."

The European Community threatened to interrupt cooperation with Moscow if it failed to return "to the path of dialogue" with the rebel republics.

Europeans condemn killings

In Prague, Charter 77, Eastern Europe's oldest human rights movement, said the Soviet authorities' action in Vilnius was reminiscent of the 1968 invasion of reformist Czechoslovakia.

Hungarian Prime Minister Jozsef Antall said Lithuania was waging an heroic struggle for freedom.

The Hungarian parliament passed a resolution expressing grave concern over the danger to international security it said was caused by the Soviet army intervention and called on Soviet forces to pull back.

President Lech Walesa said Poland backed Lithuania's independence aspirations but he stopped short of condemning Moscow.

"Today we are all moved by the situation in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Our neighbours are fighting for their incontestable rights, independence. The only question remaining is when and at what price it will be achieved," Walesa said.

In Rome, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Italy could suspend a recently-signed 2.2 trillion lire (\$1.9 billion) loan agreement with the Soviet Union if the situation in Lithuania worsened.

Amnesty calls for inquiry into killings

The human rights group Amnesty International called on Soviet leaders Monday to order a public inquiry into the deaths of demonstrators in the military crackdown in the rebel Baltic Republic of Lithuania.

"Amnesty International is seeking further information on the circumstances of the deaths and is calling on the Soviet government to initiate a full investigation and make the findings public," the London-based group said in a statement.

COLUMN 8

Bank robberies soar in southern California

LOS ANGELES (R) — A leading economic indicator for southern California — bank robberies — is soaring. Sixty bank robberies were committed in the first 11 days of this year as compared with 1,667 for the whole of last year, police said. Economists say bank robberies and living costs go up together in southern California, dubbed the bank robbery capital of the world. Police believe the reasons for so many bank robberies are the large number of bank branches and that many branches are close to freeways, enabling robbers to make a fast escape. The California Bankers Association has run a full-page advertisement in local newspapers containing the photographs of 15 alleged bank robbers and asking for public help to arrest them.

AIDS vaccine found safe in 1st human trials

PHILADELPHIA (R) — The first U.S. human trials of an AIDS vaccine have found it to be safe, a study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* said. The three-year study established that the vaccine, called recombinant GP160, was tested safely on 72 healthy patients at various U.S. research centres. The vaccine also produced high rates of antibody response in subjects after several doses. "Our findings suggest that additional studies that examine the effects of using higher doses of RGP 160 are warranted," said the study, conducted by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), the government agency responsible for coordinating federal AIDS research. The vaccine was developed by Microgenics Inc. of West Haven, Connecticut. Another RGP160 vaccine, made by the U.S. arm of Austria-based Immuno AG, is now being tested. The RGP160 vaccine is modelled after a portion of a molecule found on the outer coat of the AIDS virus known as GP160.

Black activist stabbed before protest march

NEW YORK (AP) — The Rev. Al Sharpton was stabbed in the chest minutes before the controversial black activist was about to lead a protest march through a predominantly white neighbourhood. A suspect described only as a white male was arrested in connection with the stabbing in New York's Bensonhurst neighbourhood, police spokesman Sgt. Ed Burns said. The stab wound did not appear to be life-threatening. Sharpton, 36, was taken to Conely Island Hospital, where he was in stable condition, Burns said. Hospital spokeswoman Barbara Sullivan said that he was admitted and that a statement on his condition was being prepared. The stabbing took place as Sharpton was about to lead a protest attended by the parents of Yusef Hawkins. Hawkins was a black teenager who was killed by a group of white youths in the Brooklyn neighbourhood one and a half years ago. The highly publicised incident inflamed racial tensions in New York.

Allan Boesak plans to wed

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — Anti-apartheid leader Allan Boesak and a former television producer he had an affair with plan to marry next month, according to news reports. Boesak resigned as minister of the Ned Geref Sendingkerk Church last July after news reported he was having an affair with white television producer and star Elna Botha. He also resigned as president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, an international council of Protestant churches. Boesak and his wife of 21 years, Dorothy, divorced late last year. They have four children. A leader of South Africa's coloured community of people of mixed race, Boesak had become one of the most prominent anti-apartheid figures. He led campaigns against white-minority rule and toured the world to denounce the apartheid system of racial segregation and white dominance. His reported affair with Ms. Botha, then married, was seen as a moral rather than racial scandal. Boesak, as a married clergyman, was accused of adultery. Apartheid legislation banning inter-racial sex was scrapped in 1985.

Tentative pact reached on U.S. bases in Philippines

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Negotiators have tentatively agreed that Manila will take over a major U.S. air base and four smaller facilities when their lease expires in September, Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus said Monday.

Manglapus briefed the cabinet on the progress of U.S.-Philippine discussions on the bases, then told reporters he expected a final round of talks to be held next month.

Manglapus heads the Philippine panel.

The United States maintains Clark Air Base, Subic Bay Naval Base and four smaller installations in the Philippines under a 1947 agreement.

Two-thirds of the 23-member Senate, where anti-base sentiment is strong, must approve a treaty for the bases to remain or the U.S. military presence to continue after the accord expires on Sept. 16.

"There is a tentative understanding to take over Clark (after Sept. 16) and that we will undertake commercial activities on the east side of the runway and that the Philippine Air Force will take over the west side of the runway," Manglapus said.

At Subic, he said, the Philippines wants the American presence phased out over five years or less.

Manglapus said the two sides made tentative arrangements for the turnover to Manila of the four

smaller facilities, most of them communications installations.

He said technical committees of the Philippine and U.S. panels were continuing to discuss the status of forces and the nature of future installations allowed at Clark and Subic, and hoped to conclude next month.

Philippine negotiators and the U.S. panel, headed by chief negotiator Richard Armitage, concluded the fourth round of base talks Saturday.

On Friday, a Philippine spokesman said Washington had tentatively agreed to transfer Wallace Air Station, 270 kilometres north of Manila, and San Miguel Naval Communications Station, 100 kilometres to the northwest, on Sept. 17. The two other facilities are at Camp O'Donnel and Camp John Hay, both north of Manila.

The Americans also have agreed Philippine immigration laws would apply to the entry and departure of the 40,000 U.S. troops, military dependents and civilian employees in the country, spokesman Rafael Alunan said.

Alunan said dependents and civilian employees would have to obtain Philippine residence visas.

Manglapus said two other major issues — compensation to the Philippines for bases use and duration of the phaseout period — will be taken up in the next round.

160 hurt in Bangladesh campaign violence

DHAKA (AP) — At least 160 people were injured in fights between supporters of rival political parties on the last day for filing nominations for next month's parliamentary elections, news reports said Monday.

The clashes with guns and homemade bombs took place Sunday in at least four towns.

Deposed President Hussain Mohammad Ershad and his two largest political foes — Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia — are among more than 4,000 candidates running for the 300-seat parliament.

The Bengali-language newspaper Inquilab reported at least 50 people were injured Sunday in clashes between supporters of Hasina and Mrs. Zia in Khulan, 130 kilometres southwest of Dhaka.

At least 50 others were hurt when activists of Ershad's Jatiya Party and Mrs. Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party fought with guns and bombs, Inquilab said.

It said the fighting started when the two groups held rallies outside their offices in the same neighbourhood.

Another newspaper, Ittefaq, said a medical college in the northern town of Mymensingh was closed indefinitely Sunday after supporters of Hasina and Mrs. Zia hurled homemade bombs at each other, injuring at least 20 people.

It said the clash occurred when the rival groups tried to paint election slogans on a wall at the same time.

Violent confrontations in the southeastern cities of Chittagong and Rangamati left 40 people injured, the newspaper said.

Every national and district poll leaves thousands injured and dozens dead in Bangladesh, and the Feb. 27 elections are feared to be no exception.

Three people were killed in poll-related violence last week in Chittagong, Bangladesh's second largest city.

More than 100 parties are running, but the main contest is expected to be between Hasina's Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

The Jatiya Party's credibility is at an all-time low with its leader, Ershad, under house arrest facing charges of embezzlement and misuse of power during his eight-year rule. Several ministers in his former cabinet face similar charges, and others are in hiding.

Ershad, who resigned on Dec. 6 bowing to a popular movement, on Sunday filed nominations for five seats, the maximum a candidate can contest under electoral laws. He will be barred from running if convicted of any of the charges before the elections.

Envoy becomes Soviet foreign minister

MOSCOW (R) — Alexander Bessmertnykh, Soviet ambassador to the United States and a proclaimed supporter of good relations with the West, was Tuesday elected foreign minister.

Bessmertnykh was voted into the post by Parliament, the Supreme Soviet, after President Mikhail Gorbachev described him as an outstanding diplomat.

The parliament approved Bessmertnykh, 57, by a huge majority of 421 in favour and only three against — surprising both diplomats and many Soviet analysts who had expected strong resistance to his candidature.

The bespectacled career diplomat and former top disarmament negotiator was nominated by Gorbachev to succeed

Eduard Shevardnadze, who resigned last month.

In a speech after the nomination, Bessmertnykh, referring to the Kremlin chief's policy of working with the West, said: "The policy of new thinking will be preserved, will continue and develop."

Answering questions from deputies after his election, Bessmertnykh confirmed earlier assurances by the Kremlin leadership that Soviet troops would not take part in any action in the Gulf crisis.

Bessmertnykh had been in his Washington post for less than a year.

Shevardnadze, whose dramatic resignation and warning of looming dictatorship sparked fears in the West of a change in Soviet foreign policy, was widely

regarded in the outside world as a key figure in East-West cooperation. He stepped down under heavy fire from Communist hardliners and the military who accused him of betraying the country's interests.

Clearly addressing these fears, Bessmertnykh said: "The policy which we have followed until now was always the policy of the state and the president, and was the product of collective work of many ministries and official bodies."

The new minister, like many top Soviet diplomats a member of the Communist Party's policy-setting Central Committee, recognised that the Soviet army's bloody crackdown in Lithuania at the weekend could complicate ties with the West.

1,500 more Albanians enter Greece

ATHENS (Agencies) — More Albanians poured into neighbouring Greece over the weekend despite Greek appeals that they remain home and an Albanian promise not to punish any who return.

A spokeswoman for north-western Ioannina province said Monday that 900 Albanians crossed the border Saturday and 641 on Sunday.

More than 6,500 Albanians, mostly ethnic Greeks, have fled their Communist country since Albania relaxed controls on its mountainous border last month.

Fewer had crossed during the last week, but police said rumours the border would close again led to the weekend rush.

Greece says at least 350,000 members of Albania's population of 3.3 million are ethnic

Greeks, and has appealed to them to stay at home.

Albania says the minority is closer to 60,000 and that its members are free to leave the country legally.

Greek Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis, on the first visit by a Western leader to Albania, was greeted with jeers Monday when he urged ethnic Greeks to stay on the Albanian side of the border.

Mitsotakis stopped in a mainly ethnic Greek town on his way home and appealed for an end to the flow of refugees into his country.

"I am sure the time is coming when they (the Albanian authorities) will open the frontier and there will be free movement across the border," he said.

Khmer Rouge 'determined' to keep refugees as pawns

SITE 2 REFUGEE CAMP, Thailand (AP) — The United Nations wants to help the 300,000 Cambodian refugees in Thailand return home, but their guerrilla overlords seem determined to keep using them as pawns in the 12-year-old war.

The Khmer Rouge guerrillas are building up their "liberated zones" in western areas bordering Thailand, opposite the refugee camps.

Instead of allowing the refugees to return to their home villages, the Communist guerrillas may move them into the zones, for use in military and diplomatic manoeuvring or for contesting elections if peace comes.

"The resistance wants to populate the liberated areas with the refugees, not only to control the areas but also to keep them hold on these people," said Jean-Jacques Fressard, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Thailand.

"This seems to lead to a Lebanonisation of Cambodia," he said.

"You have a government that controls part of the country and you have three factions that each control a small part. This leads to partition rather than a settlement of the Cambodian conflict."

The Khmer Rouge, Prince Norodom Sihanouk's forces and guerrillas led by Son Sann make up a coalition fighting the government installed by Vietnam after it invaded Cambodia in December 1978 and overthrew the Khmer Rouge regime.

Some guerrilla leaders support U.N.-organised repatriation, but others "make no secret of the fact that they feel (refugees) should go back on their own," said Alan C. Doss, director of the U.N. Border Relief Operation.

The dangers of returning before a settlement and without U.N. aid were demonstrated when 60,000-100,000 civilians in Khmer Rouge "hidden camps" in Thailand were moved across the border in 1990, apparently on Thai orders. Those were camps in which U.N. officials

were not allowed to work. After being moved, large numbers of the refugees fled to U.N. camps, many with severe malaria and other diseases, malnutrition or injuries from land mines.

Most refugees in the U.N. camps arrived in 1979-80, not to join the guerrillas, but fleeing war and hunger. The Khmer Rouge has used the camps for recruitment and has diverted food, medicine and other supplies from them to the front.

Khmer Rouge guerrillas hold little territory except along the Thai border, so the camps are their main claim to a popular base.

Most refugees say they want to return to Cambodia after a peace agreement, and to their own villages, not guerrilla zones. Some have been hired inside by the government to work on logging or gem mining.

Many U.N.-trained personnel in the camps have gone to the liberated zones, where pay is higher. U.N. officials found in

June that, of 227 teachers trained in Site B, a camp operated by Sihanouk's group, only 127 remained.

Particularly worrisome are the unstable O'Trao and Site K camps, with a total of 24,000 refugees, controlled by the Khmer Rouge.

The Khmer Rouge pushed millions of people into rural labour camps during their murderous rule in 1975-78.

In early 1989, the guerrillas moved the more than 4,000 people in the U.N.-aided Borai Camp across the border, some by force. That thwarted U.N. plans to transfer them to a safer area.

Some families have been seen leaving O'Trao and Site K camps, with their chickens, pigs and other belongings, but aid officials said there was no evidence of large-scale repatriation or of force being used. Camp authorities have told refugees they soon would move into Cambodia.